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LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY:

STUDIES IN THE PSALMS.

["]LIFE, DEATH, AND
IMMORTALITY:

BS STUDIES IN THE PSALMS.
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BY THE

REV. W. O. E. OESTERLEY, D.D.

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE following pages contain the elaboration of some lectures given to members of the *Church Reading Union* in various London centres. There was not the remotest original intention of publishing them, and this is now only done in deference to numerous requests made from different quarters. If these lectures in their present, fuller, form should be found to be of use to members of this admirable Union, the considerable labour involved in preparing them will be amply repaid.

W. O. E. OESTERLEY.

LONDON, *April* 1911.

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INTRODUCTION

THE Book of Psalms has come down to us as *one* book ; the Christian Church took it over in this form from the Jewish Church. But nobody in these days would for that reason regard it as a homogeneous work. Not much importance can be placed on the ascriptions of authorship contained in many of the titles to the psalms found in the Hebrew Bible, for these are confessedly elements belonging to a tradition subsequent to the time of composition of such psalms. But those titles are in themselves a witness to the belief among the Jews in pre-Christian times that the Psalter was not a unity as regards authorship. The critical study of the Psalms has shown not only that this book is of composite authorship, but that the different psalms belong to different ages ; how great a period

of time is covered between the earliest and latest psalms it would be difficult to say; scholars are much divided in their opinions upon the subject. One thing, however, it may be confidently asserted, is certain, and that is, that whatever that period is, and whoever the authors may have been, many of the *conceptions* contained in the Psalms reflect developments of thought among pious Israelites from a time long anterior to the foundation of the Monarchy to a time which may be roughly described as the Maccabæan period.

Of these conceptions there are three sets to the consideration of which the following pages are devoted: those concerning God, those concerning Sin, and those concerning the Future Life. Those three subjects are closely inter-related. Both the conception of Sin and the conception of the Future Life are conditioned by the conception that man has concerning his God. If Sin is merely an offence against God which can be made good by some prescribed form of payment, or its equivalent, there can be nothing very serious

about it ; the conception of God which regards Him as satisfied with such payment cannot be a high one. If it is believed that, in the world of the Hereafter, God has no concern, it is, again, no high conception of God which sees His activity restricted to this world. A deeper sense of Sin can only come into being when the ethical purity and transcendent majesty of Him Who is sinned against are more fully realized ; the conception of the Future Life can only become higher when the divine power and interest are believed to extend beyond the confines of this world. Thus it will be seen at once that these three subjects are closely inter-related ; and, though they are to be dealt with separately, it is clear that they form one connected whole, and it is with this thought in our minds that we must approach the following studies.

LECTURE I.
THE DOCTRINE OF GOD.

"With Thee is the fountain of life."
Ps. xxxvi. 9.

LECTURE I.

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD.

NOTHING can illustrate more pointedly how long a period of thought-development is reflected in the Psalms than the various conceptions of the Deity contained in them. But here a word of explanation is necessary. We must distinguish, in many cases, between the outward form of certain psalms as we now have them, and the antique conceptions embodied in them. There is abundant evidence to show that in their present form none of the Psalms can be dated earlier than the time of the Second Temple ; that is to say, in structure—in their present structure—all the Psalms are post-exilic. This does not, however, mean to say that in *content* they are all of this late date ; indeed, as we shall see presently, some quite late psalms retain echoes of conceptions concerning the Deity which must have been in vogue long before the monarchy was established.

Our purpose here is to try and follow out the development of the conceptions concerning God in the Psalms ; we need not, therefore, trouble ourselves with the vexed question of the dates of particular psalms ; what we have to do is to show that some of these conceptions are ancient, while others are developed.

I. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

It may be taken as a general rule that anthropomorphic conceptions are of greater antiquity than spiritual conceptions ; this, indeed, is axiomatic. But, obvious as this is, it is by no means always taken into consideration by students when studying their Old Testament ; and this applies more especially to the Psalms, because our great familiarity with the Prayer-Book Version, with its strongly spiritualizing tendencies, has in numberless cases obscured the point of what stands in the original. But there is a further and more far-reaching reason why the obvious truth, referred to above, is left out of sight ; this is the natural tendency to interpret the Old Testament in accordance with modern ideas. Nobody would deny that it is an exceedingly difficult task to divest oneself of

the habit of thinking *à la mode traditionnelle*; our modern way of envisaging things is so fundamentally different from that which was in vogue two or three thousand years ago that it ought to stand to reason that if we are to get into the "way of thinking" proper to the ancient Israelite, we must get out of the "way of thinking" proper to the twentieth-century modern. We must remember, too, that the Western mind is of an utterly different mould from the Oriental; even at the present day, the European will never get behind the mind of the Asiatic until he learns "to look through the spectacles" of the latter. It is this want of the faculty of placing oneself within the point of view of others that is the cause of much of the truly fantastic exegesis of the Old Testament among students of the Bible. But it is very important, and very necessary, to try to place ourselves within the mental environment of the thinkers whose thoughts are portrayed in the various psalms if we are to gain any real insight into, and trace out, the development of the conception of God as reflected in the Psalter.

To trace out this development is a very difficult task—*how* difficult is only realized when one begins to undertake it—for let us

remember this : On the one hand, there are admittedly some very antique conceptions with regard to God in the Psalms ; on the other hand, it is well known how the Old Testament writings abound in figurative and metaphorical language. But how is one going to decide whether a particular passage represents a primitive¹ conception or a figurative expression ; in other words, what are the *criteria* which one must employ in seeking to distinguish between literalism and metaphor ? The thoroughgoing anthropologist is tempted to discern literalism everywhere, while the devout believer will see in every anthropomorphism a metaphor. What is to be the deciding factor or factors which shall proclaim either the one or the other right ? That is the crucial question. It will be well to take a concrete example or two. In xviii. 8-10 (9-11 in Hebr.) we have the following :

*There went up smoke in his nostrils,
And fire from his mouth devoured ;
Coals were kindled from him.
And he bowed the heavens and came down,
And thick darkness was under his feet ;
He rode upon a cherub, yea he flew,
And swooped down upon the wings of the wind.*

¹ The term is, of course, used relatively.

Does a passage like this reflect "primitive" conceptions concerning Jehovah, or is the whole a description, in figurative language, of the divine wrath ? Now take another passage, xxxvi. 7-9 (8-10 in Hebr.) :

*How precious is thy lovingkindness, O God ;
And the children of men take refuge under
the shadow of thy wings.
They are refreshed (lit. "watered") with the
blessings (lit. "fatness") of thy house,
And thou makest them to drink of the river
of thy delights.
For with thee is the fountain of life ;
In thy light shall we see light.*

Is this passage figurative in its language, or is it to be taken in a literal sense ? One more example, xi. 6 :

*Upon the wicked he shall rain snares,
Fire and brimstone and burning wind shall be
the portion of their cup.*

Are these words to be interpreted literally or metaphorically ? Before attempting to offer a clue which may be of help in answering these questions, we must emphasize this fact,—there is no sort of doubt that to those who edited the Psalms in their present form, all passages similar to those quoted were under-

stood in a figurative sense. But if we are seeking to trace out the development of the conceptions of God in the Psalms, we must go behind the final editing of them to the antecedents. And let us say, further, that it is a sound rule to regard all passages like those quoted as figurative, or pictorial, or metaphorical, unless some clear grounds exist for believing them to re-echo earlier conceptions.

Now, to know whether in a given passage there are any indications that it reflects earlier thought requires a good deal of previous study of the ancient religion of Israel, as well as of those religions, such as the Egyptian, Babylonian, and Canaanite, which influenced Israelite belief; but the generality of students have little or no knowledge of these religions, and they have, therefore, to take on trust a good deal that they are told on these subjects; while one entirely sympathizes with the student in his, or her, feeling that this is unsatisfactory, the students must, on their part, remember that it places the lecturer in a disadvantageous position; for sometimes statements will be thought arbitrary and dogmatic, which those versed in Semitic belief will know to be quite

elementary truths. There is only one remedy for this, and that is that the students should themselves pursue the study of topics which are indispensable for an adequate understanding of the theology of the Psalms. But to return ; we have said that it is a sound rule to regard passages like those just quoted as containing figurative language, unless some clear grounds exist for believing them to re-echo earlier conceptions. But here it will be objected : " Granted that a passage does re-echo earlier conceptions, why should that fact make the language any the less figurative ? " Here is a good example of the way in which a lecturer is placed at a disadvantage, for if he bluntly replies, " Because the earlier you go back, the more materialistic are the conceptions," he will be thought dogmatic ; nevertheless, the student of Comparative Religion knows that the answer contains a very elementary truth. So this answer must serve.

And we must now give one example, in which we will try to show why in a given passage there are grounds for believing that it re-echoes ancient belief, so that originally the conceptions it contains were materialistic. Our example shall be the first of the passages quoted above, xviii. 8-10 (9-11 in Hebr.).

The first three clauses refer to a theophany, in which Jehovah appears in fire ; one has but to refer to some of the earlier biblical passages in which Jehovah is mentioned in connection with fire, in order to realize at once that there was a widely current belief that Jehovah literally appeared in fire ; we cannot quote all these passages here, but they should be read, and therefore the references are given : Exod. iii. 2, xiii. 21, xix. 16-25, xxiv. 17 ; Deut. iv. 11, 12, 33, 36, v. 4, xxxii. 22, xxxiii. 2 ; 2 Kings ii. 11, vi. 17 ; Ps. 1. 3, lxxxiii. 14, 15, xcvi. 2-5, civ. 32, cxliv. 5, 6 ; Isa. xxx. 27, 28, xxxi. 9, xxxiv. 8-10, lxvi. 15 ; Amos i. 3 ff. ; Mic. i. 6, 7 ; Nah. i. 6 ; Hab. iii. 4, 5 ; Zeph. i. 18, iii. 8 ; Mal. iv. 1. If all these passages be carefully read and thought over, the conclusion will certainly be arrived at that in early Israel it was held that on certain special occasions Jehovah did, and would again, appear in visible form, in fire ; this being so, it is difficult to believe that the conception contained in the passage before us was not originally understood literally ; but it is a *naïve* conception, and witnesses to an undeveloped doctrine of God. We may indeed wonder that such-like passages, of which there are

a good number in the Psalms, were not expunged when the final redaction took place, in an age in which the doctrine of God had become far more spiritual; the reason probably is that passages like the one under consideration are remnants of very ancient songs which had been incorporated into the psalms in question because they were hallowed by traditional use; it is well known how the essence of popular songs is handed down from generation to generation long after the original sense has been forgotten.¹

If we turn to the next two clauses in this passage,

*And he bowed the heavens and came down,
And thick darkness was under his feet,*

we shall see that here, again, there are echoes of very old-world conceptions of God. On comparing these lines with other and earlier passages of the Old Testament, it will be found difficult to resist the conviction that, according to the old belief, this was intended to be a description of things literal, and not a figurative representation. In his comment

¹ This is also true in a remarkable degree of popular stories; for example, the fairy-tale "Snow-white." See Böklen, *Schneewittchen* (Mythologische Bibliothek, Band III., Heft 2).

on these words Prof. Briggs says: "God, enthroned above the physical heavens, the blue expanse, bends them when He would descend in theophany. He comes down on them. So, Exod. xxiv. 10, the elders of Israel *saw the God of Israel; and there was under His feet, as it were, a work of bright sapphire and, as it were, the very heaven for brightness.* The 'very heaven,' its sapphire-blue expanse, was the base on which the feet of the theophanic God stood. Here, however, *under His feet* was *thick darkness*, because the theophany was in a storm of wrath; there it was in the bright sunshine of favour to establish a covenant with His people. So Solomon, in the snatch of an ancient poem preserved from the book of Yashar (according to the Septuagint), says, *Yahweh dwelt in thick darkness*, 1 Kings viii. 12 = 2 Chron. vi. 1; cp. Ps. xcvi. 2, and the cloud of the theophany at Horeb, Exod. xx. 18, Deut. iv. 11, v. 22."¹ The words in Judg. v. 4, 5, are also worth thinking of in this connection:

*Lord, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
When thou marchedst forth out of the field of
Edom,*

¹ *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* ("International Critical Commentary") i. p. 143.

*The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.
The mountains flowed down at the presence of
the Lord,
Even yon Sinai at the presence of the Lord,
the God of Israel.*

And then, lastly, in the passage from the Psalms which we are considering, there are the words :

*He rode upon a cherub, yea he flew,
And swooped down upon the wings of the wind.*

Of what spiritual truth are these words a figurative expression? Well may Prof. Briggs say that "the conception of the psalm is a primitive one"; for there is only one explanation of the words, and that is that they originally expressed what was believed to be a literal fact. The final redactor of this psalm, who most probably did not accept the words in a literal sense, would have found it difficult to explain what their spiritual meaning was; their presence is, indeed, only to be accounted for in the way already hinted at, namely that, having been once incorporated, time-honoured use was respected. When it is realized what the history of the conception of the *Cherubim* is, it may be taken for granted that the words

in the *Te Deum*, "To Thee Cherubin and Seraphin continually do cry . . .," are not now-a-days understood in a literal sense, as was probably the case with our forefathers ; nevertheless, we retain the words in our glorious Church hymn ; whatever they may originally have meant does not affect us when we use them as a figurative expression of the truth that spiritual beings do worship God.

At any rate, it is on the lines briefly indicated that one has to work in order to justify the assertion that certain passages in the Psalms, however they may have been understood when the final redaction took place, were originally believed to express literal truths ; and the fact that this was so, proves that in the Psalms we have indications that the doctrine of God has passed through stages. If, then, we are to study the doctrine of God as reflected in the Psalms, these various stages must be taken into consideration.

II. THE FIRST STAGE OF BELIEF.

What has been said will receive further emphasis and illustration in this section, in which we shall consider a few instances of ancient conceptions concerning God, and seek

at the same time to indicate why, in their origin, these must have been understood literally.

In lxxiv. 12-15 occur the following words :

*God is my King from of old,
Working salvation in the midst of the earth ;
Thou didst split in twain the Sea in thy strength,
Thou didst brake in pieces the heads of the
dragons in the waters ;
Thou didst smash the heads of Leviathan ;
Thou wilt give him for food,—for food to the
denizens of the waste ;¹
Thou didst cleave fountain and flood ;
Thou didst dry up ancient rivers.*

The reference here is to something that happened long ago. The words, which seem to be taken from some ancient poem, tell of how Jehovah overcame a great monster for the sake of those who were to live on the earth ;² this monster is represented as the Sea, personified, and he is also called Leviathan. Strong expressions are used to express

¹ The Hebrew of this clause is corrupt ; the above rendering of it is based upon an emended form.

* ² In many of the references to this event the Creation of the world is spoken of, which leads to the supposition that the conflict was believed to have taken place preparatory to the creation of man on the earth ; see, in this psalm, verses 16, 17.

the vehemence of the divine onslaught upon this mighty monster and his brood of dragons. Although, as we shall see, this great conflict is always spoken of as having taken place in the distant past, in one of the clauses of the passages before us the future is used: *Thou wilt give them for food—for food to the denizens of the waste*; ¹ that is to say, that the *final* destruction of the monster will not take place until some future time. This accords with what is said in some other passages in which this conflict is referred to; for example, in Isa. xxx. 7 the monster is spoken of as “silenced,” in Ps. lxxxix. 10 (11 in Hebr.) he is “humbled” (see, further on this passage, below), in Amos ix. 3 he is spoken of as still capable of harm; but nowhere is the monster spoken of as being wholly annihilated, for this is only to take place in the great “Day of the Lord.” It will be well, before proceeding, to show that this great act of Jehovah’s is often referred to elsewhere in the Old Testament.

Isa. xxvii. i. :

In that day shall Jehovah punish with his terrible, mighty, and powerful sword,

¹ In connection with this, see Ezek. xxix. 1-5, xxxii. 1-5.

*Leviathan the coiling serpent, Leviathan the
crooked serpent,
And he will slay the Dragon which is in the sea.*

This passage speaks of the *final* destruction which is to take place in the "Day of the Lord." The primeval conflict is spoken of in Isa. li. 9, 10 :

*Rouse thee, rouse thee, put on strength, Arm of
Jehovah ;
Rouse thee as in days of old, as in ages long
since past.
Art thou not (he) which clave in pieces Rahab,
which pierced the Dragon ?
Art thou not (he) which dried up the Sea, the
waters of Tehom Rabbah ?*

Jehovah is here called upon to fight the enemies of His people, just as, long ago, He fought the mighty Dragon ; the drying up of the Red Sea during the flight from Egypt is referred to as, in some sense, a repetition of the primeval conflict. "Rahab" is a synonym for "Tehom Rabbah" (the "Great Deep"), as can be seen by comparing the three passages from the book of Job and from Ps. lxxxix. to be quoted below. It means "the insolent one," and is in several passages applied to Egypt ; so, for example,

in Ps. lxxxvii. 4, Isa. xxx. 7 (cp. Job ix. 12, 13), and especially Ezek. xxix. 1-4, xxxii. 2.

Job xxvi. 12, 13 :

*With his might did he still the Sea,
And with his skill did he cleave in pieces
Rahab.*

*Heaven's bolts were terrified at him ;¹
He hath dishonoured with his hand the coiling
Serpent.²*

Job vii. 12 :

*Am I the Sea, or the Dragon,
That thou settest a watch over me ?*

Job xli. 1-34 (xl. 25—xli. 26 in Hebr.). This passage is too long to quote in full, but the points of importance in it, in the present connection, are that Leviathan, the Sea-monster, is too strong for any one to overcome—Jehovah alone has the power to do this ; the minute account of Leviathan suggests the echo of a very living tradition concerning it. This passage, when read in connection with the others quoted or referred to, will be found to be full of significance.

All these passages—and there are others

¹ This is the Septuagint rendering, with which, by a very slight emendation, the Hebrew text agrees.

² In the preceding verses the Creation is referred to.

which belong to the same category—throw light on the quotation from Ps. lxxiv., and all bear witness to a very ancient conception of God. Our next passage from the Psalms is lxxxix. 8-10 (9-11 in Hebr.):

*O Lord, God of hosts, who is like unto thee,—
Mighty Yah?*

And thy faithfulness is round about thee.

Thou rulest the Sea when she riseth up,

Thou stillest her waves when they roar (cp. the Septuagint);

*Thou didst humble (cp. the Septuagint) Rahab,
as one that is dishonoured;*

*With thy mighty arm hast thou scattered thine
enemies.*

It will be obvious at once that here we have a reference to the same great conflict which Jehovah was believed to have waged against the mighty monster long ago. It is not necessary to go into further details.¹

¹ See the whole subject dealt with in the writer's *The Evolution of the Messianic Idea*. It would be well worth the trouble to read the Babylonian account of this primeval conflict, in which Merodach is the divine champion, and Tiamat (= Tehom, "The Deep") is the enemy. The text of this in an English translation can be seen in Ball's *Light from the East*, pp. 2-11, or in Pinches' *The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records and Legends of Assyria and Babylonia*, pp. 1-68. See also Driver's *Genesis* (in the "Westminster Commentaries"), pp. 26-31.

When we find, therefore, in the Psalms that this time-honoured tradition has been incorporated, we must regard it as reflecting an antique conception of Jehovah, which the ancient Israelites accepted in a literal sense ; for if the content of all these passages did not narrate what was believed, at one time, to have literally happened, what is the meaning of them, and to what do they refer, and how are they now to be interpreted ? It is better for us to acknowledge frankly the fact, witnessed to in an infinite variety of ways, that revelation is progressive, and that it is wholly in accordance with the divine method to bring men by slow degrees to the fulness of the Truth.

What has been said reflects the earliest stage in the history of the doctrine of God as contained in the Psalms.

III. THE SECOND STAGE OF BELIEF.

A second stage in the Israelite conception of God, as reflected in the Psalms, is that wherein the influence of earlier conceptions is seen, but wherein there is a tendency to spiritualize them. It is often very difficult, perhaps sometimes impossible, to determine

whether, in any given passage, the more primitive type of conception, or the spiritualizing tendency predominates. We are not thinking here of the particular aspect of the Deity with which we were concerned in the last section, but of certain ideas regarding the personality and action of God, which, while being an advance upon what had gone before, nevertheless fall far short of the sublime doctrine that was to come. The consideration of a large number of passages, only a very few of which can be dealt with here, leads, however, to the conviction that an intermediate stage of thought must have supervened; a stage in which an ever-progressing revelation necessitated, by degrees, a modification of the old ideas, while, nevertheless, the tenacity with which time-honoured beliefs cling made men loth to part from them altogether. That is a process which is often repeated in the history of the development of religious thought.

We have spoken of a first and second stage of belief, and we shall deal with a third one presently; by this is not meant, however, that clear-cut periods of time can be indicated during which such and such beliefs were held, and in which such and such

developments took place ; the steps in the development of belief, especially in ancient times, are extremely gradual ; sometimes there is a long period during which it seems to be stationary ; sometimes, as it were, two steps forward and one step back may characterize the halting advance ; sometimes, indeed, there may be a wholly retrograde movement ; but, taken altogether, the development proceeds, and is not realized by the generation until it has taken place. We look back upon the history of the development of religious thought, and are able to see that between such and such centuries there is a great change, but exactly when or how this took place we cannot tell—at least not until, comparatively speaking, modern times. In studying any doctrine of the Psalms we come across much which seems wholly illogical or contradictory ; it is very far from being so in reality ; what we have reflected in the Psalms is an extremely faithful witness of what is always going on in the hearts of men—a conflict, in the highest sense of the word, between old and new ; the old is good, perhaps the new is better—perhaps not, always ; but, at any rate, the old is good, and must not be parted with hurriedly ; will not be

parted with unless necessary, and then only with a pang ; and its influence will not cease all at once ; and it is better so. But the new will come ; that is inevitable ; and it is best so—ultimately. In the Psalms are reflected the thoughts of many ages, and of periods distant from each other ; we have said so already, and it must be emphasized ; for if this truth is lost sight of, one of the great elements in the *rationale* of revelation, to which the Psalms bear such abundant witness, will be lost sight of too ; we refer to what is to many the sheet-anchor of belief, namely, that the knowledge of God comes to men “by divers portions and in divers manners” ; if it were not so, many men would, in spite of themselves, be tempted to say, “There is no God.”

Let us now consider one or two passages in the Psalms which may fairly be instanced as witnessing to what we have ventured to call an intermediate stage in the development of the doctrine of God, as reflected in the Psalms. We will take first a passage which, at first sight, does not appear to offer any grounds for placing it in this category ; a moment's thought will, however, show that there is justification for doing so.

xxiv. I, 2 :

*The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof,
The world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.*

Here we have, first, a conception of Jehovah which is an advance upon pre-exilic belief ; He is seen to be the universal God, and the only God of the whole earth. This is very different from the earlier conception which regarded Him as the God of Israel, much in the same way as Chemosh was the god of the Moabites, Ashtoreth of the Zidonians, and Milcom of the Ammonites (see 2 Kings xxiii. 13), a conception which, as we shall see presently, is also to be found in the Psalms. But while in the first couplet before us there is this more developed belief, in the second there appears the early, quaint idea of Jehovah having founded the earth upon the seas, a belief which is echoed elsewhere in the Psalms, for example in cxxxvi. 6,

*To him that spread forth the earth above the
waters (cp. Isa. xlii. 5, xliv. 24),*

and which is identical with that expressed

in the Babylonian Cosmogony (cp. Driver, *Genesis*, p. 29). In this same psalm, again, we have the following very familiar verses, 7, 8:

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates ;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ;
And the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is the King of Glory ?
Jehovah, strong and mighty,
Jehovah, mighty in battle.*

The expressions here used are only applicable to a warrior. If it were only here that they were used in reference to Jehovah, it might well be claimed that they were intended to be taken figuratively ; that they were so intended by the final editor of the Psalter may be regarded as certain, but that they echo earlier thought is equally certain ; see, for example, *Exod.* xv. 3, 4, 6 :

Jehovah is a man of war ; Jehovah is his name.

Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea. . . .

*Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power,
Thy right hand, O Jehovah, dasheth in pieces the enemy.*

But while this ancient conception of God

thus finds expression, other passages in this same psalm (xxiv.) witness to a far more exalted belief, thus showing the old and the newer thought in close proximity.

The same is the case in xxxv. ; thus, in the two first verses we again find Jehovah spoken of as a warrior :

Strive thou, O Lord, with them that strive with me ;

*Fight thou against them that fight against me.
Take hold of shield and buckler,*

And stand up for mine help.

Draw out spear and battle-axe,

To encounter him that pursueth me ;

Say unto my soul : " I am thy salvation."

On the other hand, in verses 27, 28, there is a more exalted conception of God :

*Let them shout for joy and be glad that delight
in my ¹ righteousness,*

*And let them say continually : " The Lord be
magnified,*

*Which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his
servant."*

*And my tongue shall talk of thy righteousness,
(And) of thy praise all the day.*

We referred just now to the fact that in

¹ The context seems rather to demand " Thy " here ;
cp. verse 28.

some of the psalms Jehovah is spoken of as though He were not the One and only God ; He is the only God of *Israel*, but the belief that there were other gods in existence, who were the tutelary deities of the nations, is held. This henotheistic, as distinct from the later monotheistic, belief witnesses to a lower conception of God than that which was subsequently held ; it is reflected in the Psalms, for example, in lxxxvi. 8 :

*There is none like unto thee among the gods,
O Lord ;*

*Neither (are there any works) like unto thy
works.*

The “ gods ” here referred to are the national deities of other peoples, who are believed to be actually in existence, but are regarded as inferior to the God of Israel. In the two verses which follow, the psalmist utters a universalistic note, and prophesies that a time will come when the Gentiles will forsake their gods and worship Jehovah :

All nations whom thou hast made

*Shall come and worship before thee, O Lord,
And they shall glorify thy Name.*

*For great art thou, and doest wondrous things,
Thou art God alone.*

With regard to this last clause the rendering of the Septuagint is certainly to be preferred,

Thou, O God, alone art great,

for this accords better with the context. According to the Hebrew, this is a monotheistic note which does not agree with the recognition of the existence of heathen gods expressed in the context ; the Greek, on the other hand, sounds a henotheistic note—God alone is great, but other lesser deities exist ; this is what has been implied in the context.

Another passage of importance in this connection is xcvi. 4, 5 :

*For great is the Lord, and highly to be praised,
He is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are worthless,
But the Lord made the heavens.*

The point here is that while Jehovah has done all things for His people (cp. the preceding verses), the gods of the peoples have done nothing for them ; the idea underlying the word “worthless” cannot here, at any rate, mean “non-existent,” otherwise the clause, *He is to be feared above all gods*, would

be out of place. This can be further illustrated by the words in xcvi. 7 :

*Let all those that serve graven images be ashamed,
(And) those that boast themselves of idols (lit.
"in worthless things") ;
Worship him, all ye gods.*

And xlv. 20, 21 (21, 22 in Hebr.) :

*If we have forgotten the name of our God,
Or spread forth our hands to a strange god ;
Shall not God search this out ?
For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*

This last is very instructive, for in the same breath, as it were, expression is given to the older conception that God is only one (albeit the greatest) among many, as well as the highly spiritual conception that He knows the secrets of the heart. See also, on the subject before us, lxxxi. 9, cxxxv. 5, cxxxvi. 2, which it will not be necessary to quote. That the conception here reflected was at one time the normal belief in Israel will be clear to any one who consults, among others, these passages : Gen. xxxv. 2, 3 ; Exod. xv. 11, xviii. 11, xx. 3, xxiii. 13, xxxiv. 14 ; Josh. xxiv. 20, 23 ; 2 Kings xviii. 33, 35, etc.¹ It was, under

¹ As Mr. Israel Abrahams says : " God, in the early literature ■ tribal non-moral deity, was in the later literature

God, the great teachers who brought the reality of things before the people in such passages as Isa. xliv. 8-20, xlvi. 5-7; Ps. cxv. 4-8 (= cxxxv. 15-18), together with their positive teaching concerning God, which finally eradicated the idea of a plurality of gods from the minds of their hearers.

What has been said will, it is hoped, have illustrated what may be regarded as an intermediate stage in the history of the conception of God as reflected in the Psalms.

IV. THE FINAL STAGE OF BELIEF.

What is by far the most characteristic note in the Psalms regarding the doctrine of God is the developed form of this which predominates; and it is, unquestionably, this which, more than anything else, makes the Psalms so precious to us.

We must divide this section into two parts. In the first we shall deal with the character and personality of God as taught by the

a righteous ruler who, with Amos and Hosea, loved and demanded righteousness in man. Judaism took over as one indivisible body of sacred teachings both the early and the later literature in which these varying conceptions of God were enshrined" (*Judaism*, p. 5). It is these varying conceptions of many ages which are reflected in the Psalms.

psalmists ; while in the second we shall speak more particularly about the personal relationship between God and men, though, of course, it is not possible to keep these two wholly distinct.

i. The attributes of God are so abundantly expressed in the Psalms, and we are so familiar with them from our knowledge of the Psalms, that it will not be necessary to give more than one or two quotations illustrative of each attribute ; but that some reference should be made to this part of our subject is demanded, because it is such an essential element of the doctrine of God in the Psalms.

The *Ethical Purity* of God is taught, for example, in xii. 6 :

*The words of the Lord are pure words ;
As silver tried in a furnace on the earth,
Purified seven times (cp. xix. 7-11).*

The *Holiness* of God is nowhere more fittingly expressed than in the whole of xcix. :

*The Lord is great in Zion ;
And he is high above all the peoples.
Let them praise thy great and terrible Name :
Holy is he !*

This divine characteristic is repeated as a kind of refrain at the close of each of the three sections into which the psalm is divided.

The *Righteousness* of God is a subject of which the psalmists are never tired of singing. One of the most beautiful passages descriptive of this, in which also other divine characteristics are sung of, is lxxxv. 8-13 (9-14 in Hebr.):

*I will hear what the Lord God will speak,
 For he will speak peace unto his people, and
 to his saints. . . .
 Surely his salvation is nigh unto them that fear
 him,
 That glory may dwell in our land.
 Mercy and truth are met together,
 Righteousness and peace kiss each other.
 Truth springeth out of the earth,
 And righteousness hath looked down from
 heaven. . . .
 Righteousness goeth before him,
 And peace (is) in the way of his footsteps.¹*

It is the characteristic of righteousness which impels the psalmists again and again to pro-

¹ So, with a slight emendation of the Hebrew text, which is corrupt as it stands.

claim God's *Justice*, especially in the conception of God as Judge of the whole earth ; for example, ix. 7, 8 (8, 9 in Hebr.) :

*The Lord sitteth (as King) for ever,
He hath set up his throne for judgement ;
And he will judge the world in righteousness,
And will minister judgement to the peoples
with equity (cp. xcvi. 2).*

Again, in xcvi. 13 :

*. for he cometh,
For he cometh to judge the earth ;
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples in his faithfulness (cp.
xcviii. 9).*

In these, and other similar passages, it will be noticed that a universalistic note is sounded ; the whole world, not merely the Jewish nation, is subject to the justice of God. This conception of God has an important bearing on the rise of eschatological thought, which was coming more and more to the fore during the period in which some of the later psalms were written.

It will be both interesting and instructive to illustrate the doctrine of the divine Judgeship in

its relation to eschatological thought by a few quotations from those portions of *The Book of Enoch* which may be dated, respectively, about 170 B.C.,¹ 166-161 B.C.,² 134-95 B.C.,³ and 94-64 B.C.⁴ Thus, in xviii. 8, 9, the throne of God is referred to: *But the middle one [i.e. of the "seven mountains of magnificent stones"] reached to heaven like the throne of God, of alabaster, and the summit of the throne was of sapphire. And I saw a flaming fire, which was in all the mountains.* In a slightly later portion of the book we have the following account of the Judgement, xc. 18-27: *And I saw till the Lord of the sheep came unto them, and took the staff of His wrath into His hand, and smote the earth so that it was rent asunder, and all the beasts and the birds of the heaven fell away from the sheep, and sank in the earth; and it closed over them. . . . And I saw till a throne was erected in the pleasant land, and the Lord of the sheep sat Himself thereon; and that other took the sealed books, and opened them before the Lord of the sheep. . . . And the judgement was held first over the stars; and they were judged, and found guilty, and went to the place of condemnation, and they were cast into an abyss, full of fire and flaming, and full of pillars of fire. And those seventy shepherds were*

¹ I.e. *The Book of Enoch* proper, i.-xxxvi.

² I.e. chaps. lxxxiii.-xc. belonging to *The Book of Enoch* proper, and lxxii.-lxxxii., which are known as *The Book of Celestial Physics*.

³ To this date belong chaps. xci.-civ. of *The Book of Enoch* proper.

⁴ I.e. chaps. xxxvii.-lxx., known as *The Book of Similitudes*. The remaining portions of the "Enoch" literature are not extant.

found guilty, and likewise cast into that fiery abyss. And I saw how at that time a like abyss was opened in the midst of the earth, full of fire; and those blinded sheep were brought, and they were all judged, and found guilty, and were cast into that fiery abyss, and they burned. . . . (Cp. St. Matt. xxv. 31-46.)

This allegorical picture appears in a more literal form in the later portion of the book, xci. 7-9: *And then, when unrighteousness and sin and blasphemy and violence in all kinds of deeds will increase, and apostasy and transgression and uncleanness increase, a great chastisement from heaven will come upon them all, and the holy Lord will come forth with wrath and chastisement to execute judgement on earth. . . . And they [i.e. the heathen] will be cast into the judgement of fire, and will perish in wrath, and in grievous eternal judgement.* Finally, one illustration from *The Book of Similitudes*, lxix. 27, 28: *And he sat on the throne of his glory and the sum of judgement was committed unto him, the Son of Man, and he caused the sinners, and those who have led the world astray, to pass away and be destroyed from off the face of the earth. With chains shall they be bound, and in their assemblage-place of destruction shall they be imprisoned, and all their works shall vanish from the face of the earth.*¹ Cp. also *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Levi iv. 1, Benjamin x. 8-11 (belonging to 109-106 B.C.).²

There can be no doubt that the thoughts

¹ Cp. R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, translated from Prof. Dillmann's Ethiopic Text (1893).

² Cp. R. H. Charles, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, translated from the Editor's Greek Text (1908).

here reflected represent a step between the doctrine of the divine Judgeship, as gathered up in the Psalms, and the teaching of the New Testament. It is very characteristic of the fulness with which the divine characteristics are portrayed in the Psalms that the righteousness and justice of God should be balanced by the abundant expression of His *Mercy* and *Lovingkindness* ; see, for example, lix. 16, 17 (17, 18 in Hebr.) :

*But I will sing of thy strength,
 Yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the
 morning ;
 For thou hast been a high tower to me,
 And a refuge in the day when I was in trouble.
 My Strength, unto thee will I sing.
 For God is my strong tower,
 The God of my mercy (cp. verse 10 [11 in
 Hebr.]).*

The reference here is to the mercy shown to a particular individual on some specific occasion ; elsewhere the divine quality of mercy is described in its more general bearing ; so in ciii. 17 :

*But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to
 everlasting upon them that fear him,
 And his righteousness upon children's chil-
 dren, . . .*

Or, again, xxv. 10 :

*All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness
and truth,
Unto such as keep his covenant and his
testimonies.*

But the mercy of God is pre-eminently shown in His free forgiveness of sins. We have already dealt with this subject, but one or two further quotations may be given to illustrate it ; lxxviii. 38 :

*But he is merciful, he forgiveth iniquity, and
destroyeth not ;
And oft-times doth he turn away his anger,
and stirreth not up all his wrath.¹*

This divine characteristic is perhaps best expressed in what is certainly one of the most beautiful passages in the whole Psalter, viz. ciii. 9-13 :

*Not unceasingly doth he chide,
Not for ever doth he keep (his wrath) ;
Not according to our sins doth he deal with us,*

¹ The words of the verse are parenthetic, describing a divine characteristic which is constant, and therefore in the original the present tense is used.

Not according to our iniquities doth he reward us.

*For as high as the heaven (is) above the earth,
So exalted¹ is his mercy on them that fear him.*

*As far as the east (is) from the west,
So far hath he put from us our transgressions.*

*As a father hath compassion on his children,
So hath the Lord compassion on them that fear him (cp. also lxxix. 9).*

Closely connected with the divine attribute of mercy is the oft-expressed truth that God is the *Helper* of the helpless, and of those in trouble ; for example, xxv. 5 :

*Guide me in thy truth, and teach me,
For thou art the God of my salvation ;
On thee do I wait all the day.*

The word "Salvation" in the Old Testament is never used in the sense which it bears in the New Testament ; in the former it always means help or deliverance in a temporal sense. It is true that in the Psalms, and once or twice in Ezekiel (xxxvi. 29, xxxvii. 23), an added spiritual idea is discernible, but the primary

¹ So, according to a very slight emendation of the Hebrew text ; the parallelism demands some such expression as this.

sense is always that of deliverance from physical evils. This is plainly seen, for example, in xxvii. 9, 10 :

*Hide not thy face from me,
Put not away thy servant in anger ;
Thou hast been my help ;
Cast me not off, and forsake me not,
O God of my salvation.
When my father and mother have forsaken
me,
Then will the Lord take me up* (cp. lxv. 5,
lxxxv. 4, lxxxviii. 1 ff. etc.).

Of the attribute of the *Majesty* of God we shall speak presently.

It is only when these various divine characteristics are thus gathered up together that one realizes how full and exalted is the conception of God in its more developed form in the Psalms. In the prophetic books we find, speaking generally, that some one divine attribute is specially emphasized by each prophet. Amos, for example, lays main stress in his teaching upon the justice of God ; the whole trend of the book of Hosea is to set forth the mercy of God ; Isaiah teaches, as none other, the majesty of God ; one of the main objects of the book of Micah is to declare that God is the Helper of the helpless ;

the essence of the book of Jonah is the teaching of the universal Fatherhood of God ; and so on. In the Psalms all these divine attributes find abundant expression ; in them there is a summing-up of all that went before concerning the Personality of God ; the thoughts of many hearts are expressed, but a marvellous unity pervades all ; the voices of many ages swell out into a great harmonious chorus, each singing its appropriate part.

ii. We come now to speak more especially of the relationship between God and men, though we shall be concerned a good deal with two further attributes of God.

It has been not infrequently stated by Christian theologians, and the statement is often resented by Jewish writers, that the Jewish doctrine of God makes Him far-distant and withdrawn from the individual. There is an element of truth in this so far as the later Judaism is concerned, for here a tendency is observable which lays over-much stress on transcendentalism, to the partial exclusion of the other side of the truth. This subject is, in reality, one which bears so strongly on practical and devotional religion, it is, moreover, one which, as we shall see, is of such importance when considered in its contrast

with the doctrine of God as contained in the Psalms, that a short digression, in order to deal quite briefly with it, will be pardoned.

What is known as the "hypostatizing tendency," i.e. the tendency to make abstract conceptions concerning the Deity "substantial" (in the technical sense), comes before us in a more or less stereotyped form as early as the time of the *Targums*,¹ which certainly reflect the thought of earlier times. With the fuller realization of the Personality of God, and of His transcendent majesty, the Jewish teachers, prompted by reverential awe, sought to screen the Almighty, as it were, from the presumptuous approach of insignificant, earth-born man. That God Almighty should directly concern Himself with the petty affairs of men seemed derogatory to His supreme majesty. Just as there was a disinclination, on account of its transcendent holiness, to utter the Name of God, and to substitute instead paraphrases for it, so there arose a disinclination to ascribe divine action

¹ I.e. the Aramaic translations of the Old Testament which became necessary when Hebrew ceased to be the common language of the Jews. In their earliest *written* form they were in existence in the first century A.D.; but for a long time before this they had been handed down orally.

among men directly to God, because of His inexpressible majesty and holiness. Therefore the doctrine was propounded of the existence of semi-divine, super-human, spiritual beings through whose agency God's will was performed on earth. They occupy an intermediate position, according to the teaching of the Rabbis, between personalities and abstract conceptions. While at one time they are represented as being so closely connected with God as to appear as "parts" of Him, or attributes, at other times they are spoken of as undertaking individual action in such a way as to differentiate them from God. It must, of course, be remembered that a great deal of what is written about these intermediate beings in Rabbinical literature is to be understood figuratively; but, when every possible allowance is made for this, there is still the underlying idea which gave birth to these conceptions; and it is this which is important in the later Jewish doctrine of God. There are four of these intermediate beings, and they all figure prominently in the *Targums*, in *Midrashic* works, and in the *Talmud*; they are: *Metatron*, i.e. he who occupies the next rank to the Ruler; the *Memra*, or "Word" of

God ; the *Holy Spirit* ; and the *Shekhinah*, or "Glory" of God.¹

The danger which the Rabbis sought to counteract in framing their doctrine of intermediate beings was that of conceiving of the Deity in a manner which was wanting in reverence ; an undue familiarity in addressing God, or in speaking about Him, inevitably results in the lessening of spiritual religion. The Rabbis were undoubtedly right ; only it was necessary to guard against running into another extreme, that, namely, of conceiving God to be so distant from men as to take practically no personal interest in them. One may say, indeed, that the danger of men falling into one or other of these extremes is ever present ; there is a way of speaking about God and of holy things generally, and of addressing God in prayer in an all too familiar strain, which betokens a lack of the realization of the immeasurable distance between God and men, and which obscures the truth of the unapproachable majesty of God ; on the other hand, it is possible to exaggerate the distance between God and man in such a

¹ For a detailed account of the subject, see Oesterley and Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, chap. ix. (second edition).

way as to lose sight of the Fatherhood of God, and therefore of His closeness to men.

Now in the doctrine of God as taught in the Psalms it is in the highest degree striking to see what a wonderful balance is preserved between these two truths ; on the one hand, the majesty of God is taught and emphasized in such a way that it is only equalled by some of the most sublime passages in the prophetic books ; while, on the other hand, the closeness of God to His children, and the intimate relationship that exists between Him and them, is there portrayed in such a manner that we instinctively turn to the Psalms for comfort in trouble, for guidance in perplexity, and for spiritual peace. The doctrine of God, in its fullest development, in the Psalms is such that, in the light of Christian revelation, we realize to some extent the awe-inspiring divinity of the Godhead, while the Father's intense sympathy for human need and suffering seems to adumbrate the great and holy mystery of God made man.

Let us illustrate this. In Ps. xxix. 1, 2, we have an illustration of the conception of God's sublime majesty which is largely, if not wholly, obscured in the English Versions ; the point of the passage is that the

heavenly beings are called upon to worship Jehovah; it is not sufficient for men to fall down in adoration before the ineffable majesty of God, but the heavenly hosts are bidden to put on holy array, just as God's priests when ministering before Him in the Temple put on their holy garments, and to give Him the glory due to His Name:

*Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye sons of gods;
Ascribe unto the Lord glory and strength;
Ascribe unto the Lord the glory due unto His
Name;
Worship the Lord in holy array.*

The term "sons of gods" is used in reference to the angels, to express that they are divine beings; we have the same expression in Ps. lxxxix. 5, 6 (6, 7 in Hebr.):

*And the heavens praise Thy wonders,¹ O Lord;
And Thy faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones.
For who in the sky can be compared unto the Lord?
Who among the sons of gods is like unto the Lord?*

In both these passages the Hebrew for "gods" is *Elim*; but the term "sons of gods" probably means the same as "sons of God" (*Elohim*), which occurs, for example, in Job xxxviii. 7:

*When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy.*

See also Gen. vi. 2, 4, Exod. xv. 11, Job. i. 6, ii. 1.

¹ So the Greek and Syriac, and two Hebrew manuscripts; the ordinary Hebrew text has "wonderfulness."

In the verses which follow (in Ps. xxix.) the phrase "the voice of the Lord" is repeated seven times,¹ the holy number, to express the might of God in operation; He has but to utter His voice, and it is done. The fact that the Israelites believed that the thunder was actually God's voice in no way detracts from the underlying conception of the divine majesty; no one can read this psalm without feeling the spirit which animates it.

Another passage, very different from that just referred to, but embodying the same conception of God's majesty and might, is xxxiii. 4-9:

*For the word of the Lord (is) upright,
And all his work (is done) in faithfulness;
He loveth righteousness and judgement,
The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the
Lord.*

*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made,
And all the host of them by the breath of his
mouth.*

He gathereth the waters of the sea in a bottle,²

¹ In the original form.

² So almost all the Versions, which are to be preferred here because they offer a much better parallelism than the Hebrew "as an heap." Cp. Job xxxviii. 37: *Or who can pour out the bottles* (lit. "water-skins") *of heaven?* Cp. Job xxxviii. 8-11. The reference is to Gen. i. 6-9. God is glorified as the Creator of the universe.

*He putteth the deeps in treasure-houses.
Let all the earth be in fear of the Lord,
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in
awe of him.*

Here, again, some old-world *traits* appear, and we have the anthropomorphic expression "the breath of his mouth"; but this only reveals the extent of human limitation in seeking to realize the Deity, it does not detract from the whole-hearted worship of the Creator of all things which breathes through the whole passage.

Only one other example, out of a great number, for it so truly expresses the feelings of men in every age when they think of God; it is xl. 5 (6 in Hebr.):

*Many things hast thou done, O Lord my God,
Thy wonders and thy thoughts concerning
us—there is no setting of them in order;¹
If I would declare and speak of them,
They would be more than could be numbered.*

These few examples must suffice to illustrate one side of the more fully developed doctrine of God in the Psalms—His creative power, omnipotence, and majesty.

¹ The addition of the Hebrew of "unto thee," which is omitted in the Septuagint, is unnecessary, and in all probability not original.

In contrast to this, another psalmist, in awe and humility, cries :

*When I behold thy heavens, the work of thy
fingers,
The moon and stars which thou hast pre-
pared,—
What is man that thou shouldst be mindful of
him ?
Or the son of man that shouldst visit him ?*¹
(viii. 3, 4 [4, 5 in Hebr.]).

The insignificance of man is thus placed in telling contrast to God's glory and creative power. When we turn to the other side of the truth, it must be felt that the Psalms present us with a conception of God in relationship to man which can only be fully paralleled by the Gospel account of our Blessed Lord's attitude towards men. When, for example, we think of the familiar words of Ps. xxiii., beginning,

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,

how can we fail to be struck by the confiding, child-like trust there expressed ? What a

¹ The words which follow begin a new stanza and a new train of thought ; they refer to the creation of man. Cp. Gen. i. 27.

living realization of the nearness of God, and of His gentle guidance does that psalm reveal ! Such a conception brings Him very close to man, in spite of His transcendent majesty and might so often expressed elsewhere in the Psalms. It is this beautiful blending of the sublime glory of God and His omnipotence, with His intimate personal relationship to individual men, which constitutes one of the most striking characteristics of the doctrine of God in the Psalter. The truth that God is at once the Creator of the whole world, and that He is yet the Father and Friend of every individual on earth—this is the predominating note in the doctrine of God in the Psalms in its fuller and more developed form. See how this is brought out in the following passage, xxxvi. 5-7 (6-8 in Hebr.) :

*Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, is in the heavens,
Thy faithfulness (reacheth) unto the skies.
Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God ;
Thy judgements (are) a great deep,—*

then follow, immediately after this expression of God's transcendent greatness, these words :

*Man and beast thou preservest, O Lord.
How precious is thy lovingkindness, O God ;*

And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of thy wings.

The same thought comes out even more pointedly in cxiii. 4-6 :

*High above all nations is the Lord,
Above the heavens is his glory.
Who is like the Lord our God,
That hath his seat on high ;
And [yet] who humbleth himself to behold
Things in heaven and in earth ?*

Here again we have the "proportion of faith" held in true balance. It is not necessary to illustrate this further; all lovers of the Psalms will know how frequently we meet in them the two sides of this truth blended in harmonious accord. And it is here, as all will be agreed, that we reach the perfection of teaching concerning God in the Psalms.

V. SUMMARY.

There seem thus, broadly speaking, to be three stages of belief in the Psalter regarding the Doctrine of God; the passages quoted being, in each case, merely typical of a much larger number which should be studied if the subject here touched upon is to be

thoroughly and adequately grasped. The three stages reflected are :

1. The very early conception which echoes the belief in Jehovah as One Who was a supernatural mighty warrior ; in this stage materialistic ideas predominated.

2. The intermediate stage in which the progress of revelation necessitated a more spiritual conception of Jehovah ; but wherein, nevertheless, the tenacious grasp of traditional thought continued to assert its power.

3. The third, and final stage, which represents the highest pre-Christian conception of God ; and wherein the truth of God's transcendent majesty and power is not permitted to obscure the complementary truth of His infinitely condescending Fatherhood. In the two latter stages the divine attributes of ethical purity, holiness, righteousness, justice, mercy, and lovingkindness, receive ever greater emphasis.

It was necessary to deal with the two earlier stages, both because they formed part of our subject—being reflected in the Psalms—and because they are, in truth, of high importance as witnessing to the truth that revelation is progressive. But it is the third stage which, after all, is most characteristic of the Psalms ;

it is here that we realize, perhaps as nowhere else, that the God of Israel is our God ; it is the conception here portrayed which helps us to the Apostle's experience that God is "very near to each one of us"—that guides us to that sublime faith which makes us become as little children :

יהוה רעי לא־אחסר

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.

LECTURE II.

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN.

" They draw near unto the gates of death."
Ps. cvii. 18.

LECTURE II.

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN.

IN studying the doctrine of Sin in the Psalms, it is essential that, as a preliminary, a brief examination should be made of the different terms used to denote Sin in its different aspects. The meanings of these various terms have undergone a certain amount of modification, an inevitable consequence of the progress of ideas ; but it is particularly interesting to note that in the Psalms we find that the words used for "sin," "iniquity," "transgression," etc., are used sometimes in their earlier sense, at others in a more developed sense ; this is precisely what we should expect in a collection of literary pieces which reflect the variations of thought during a long period of time. As we have already seen in the case of the doctrine of God, the Psalms contain conceptions belonging to periods sometimes widely separated from each other ; it is the same with the

doctrine of Sin. In deciding whether a particular term is to be understood in an earlier, or more developed, sense, one must be guided by the thought contained in the context. This is not the place to enter upon a discussion of the general subject of Sin in the Old Testament ; but the following brief examination of terms will, it may be hoped, give some idea as to the early conception of Sin among the Israelites.

I. THE DIFFERENT WORDS FOR SIN USED IN THE PSALMS.

i. The most usual word for Sin is *Chatt'ath* ; the noun occurs in four forms ; that just mentioned is the one most frequently used, e.g. lix. 3 : . . . *the mighty gather themselves together against me, not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord.* Another form of the word is *Chäta'ah* ; this is only twice used in the Psalms (xxxii. 1, cix. 7) ; but the form is used for "sin-offering" in xl. 6 : *Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.* In three passages the form *chêt'* appears—li. 11, 7, ciii. 10 ; in the last of these it refers rather to a condition of guilt : *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in*

sin did my mother conceive me. Lastly, the word *Chatta'* is used of a "sinner" (i. 1, 5, synonymous with "the wicked"; xxv. 8, xxvi. 9, li. 13, civ. 35). The verb occurs very often, being the normal one for "to sin."

The original meaning of the root from which all these words come has nothing to do with Sin in the modern sense. This is proved by the force attaching to the word in cognate languages; but it is also seen from some passages in the Old Testament, in which the root-meaning is still preserved; in Judg. xx. 16, e.g., it is said: *Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men that were left-handed; every one could sling stones at an hair-breadth, and not miss*; the last word here comes from the same root as the word used for "to sin." Again, in Job v. 24, we have the following: *And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace; and thou shalt visit thy fold (or dwelling-place), and shalt miss nothing*; here, again, the word for "miss" comes from the root we are considering. So that, without going into further detail, one may say that the idea underlying the word was originally that of something that was lacking, or something that *missed the mark*. This quite corresponds, therefore, to the

frequently used word for "to sin" in the New Testament (*ἁμαρτάνω*).

It will not be without interest to refer, in a few words, here to the subject of what is called the "Sin-offering" (*Chatt'ath*), for it throws some light upon the ancient conception of sin. The central point of the "Sin-offering" was the smearing of the blood of the sacrificed animal on the horns of the altar, see, e.g., Exod. xxx. 10: *And Aaron shall make atonement upon the horns of it [i.e. of the altar] once in the year ; with the blood of the sin-offering of atonement once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations ; it is most holy unto the Lord.* The decisive act is this bringing of the blood upon the horns of the altar ; this was believed to be the first step in establishing a right relationship between the worshipper and God ; and this was accomplished by means of the blood of the offering. It is supremely important always to bear in mind, in this connection, the significance there was in blood to the ancient Hebrew, on account of its containing the life, or soul (see Lev. xvii, 11, 14). In the case of the *Chatt'ath*, or "Sin-offering," the blood first of all consecrated the altar afresh, while the offering itself was the means of re-establishing normal relations between God and the worshipper ; it was that which made reconciliation. But when it is asked what was supposed to be the cause of the relationship having been disturbed, the answer is, some ritual offence, something which had impaired the "consecrated state" of a man, i.e. the normal state in which a man should be in the sight of God. The result of a disturbed relationship

between God and man was twofold: a state of "uncleanness," and a consequent estrangement between God and him who had "missed the (ritual) mark," or "made a mistake." Therefore, to re-establish normal relations, a twofold action became necessary: first, the becoming "clean," that is, in a fit state to enable reconciliation to take place, and then the actual ceremony of reconciliation. Consecration and reconciliation are thus quite distinct; the obliteration of the "sin" does not, *per se*, bring about reconciliation with God, it only makes man in a fit state to be reconciled; the forgiveness of the sin is only the first step in the process of reconciliation.

In this *Chatt'ath*, or "Sin-offering," there was, therefore, originally only the idea of making good something that had been left undone, or erroneously accomplished—the ritual "mark" had been missed; it was a later development when its more positive character was seen, in that it became also the means of putting a man into a state of consecration, or sanctification. This was a later development, because it implied more advanced conceptions, and also because it had no real connection with the name *Chatt'ath*. In the form in which *Chatt'ath* appears in the Old Testament, the translation "Sin-offering" is misleading; as will be clear from what has been said, it should be translated "Reconciliation-offering," or, taking into account its later developed positive character, it might not incorrectly be translated "Consecration-offering." Finally—and this, too, is a point of importance—it must be remembered that the *Chatt'ath* was not an offering which was sacrificed on account of conscious

offences against the ritual laws, much less does any idea of moral offence come into consideration in connection with it. (See further, the present writer's *The Jewish Doctrine of Mediation*, pp. 22-27.)

ii. Almost as frequent as the word just considered is *ʿAvôn*, translated "iniquity"; in li. 5 (7 in Hebr.), e.g., *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me*,¹ a passage which suggests the meaning "guilt," rather than "iniquity"; and this is a rendering supported by the sense of many other passages in the Old Testament in which it occurs. The root-meaning of this word is "to turn," i.e. from the right way; the cognate Arabic root has the same meaning. This is well illustrated in xxxviii. 6 (7 in Hebr.): *I am bent*² *and bowed down greatly*, where the reference is to disease. From this root-meaning arose later on the sense which the word now usually has in the Old Testament, namely, a "perversion," a turning from the right way, i.e. God's way, and therefore displeasing to Him; perhaps the best illustration of this is in xxv. 10, 11:

¹ See further on Ps. li., pp. 93ff.

² This is the only place in the Psalms in which the verb occurs, and even here it is not certain that the Hebrew text is correct.

*All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness
and truth*

*Unto such as keep his covenant and his testi-
monies ;*

For thy name's sake, O Lord,

Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.

Here it is clear that the "iniquity" consisted in not keeping God's covenant and testimonies, and this constituted a turning from "the paths of the Lord."

In three passages this word almost acquires the extended meaning of the consequence, or punishment, of guilt, lxix. 27 (28 in Hebr.): *Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let them not come into thy righteousness ;* cp. xxxi. 10 (11 in Hebr.), cvi. 43.

In the vast majority of cases one or other of the two words just considered is used in the Psalms whenever Sin is referred to ; not infrequently they occur together in parallel clauses ; as, for example, in xxxviii. 18 (19 in Hebr.):

I avow mine iniquity ('avôn),

I am worried because of my sin (chatt'ath).

The different ideas contained in the two words may, perhaps, be expressed thus:

Chatt'ath connotes the idea of an act of sin, the "missing of the mark"; while '*Avôn*' implies rather the state of sin, the result of turning out of the right way, and walking in the wrong way.

iii. A word of much less frequent occurrence is *Pesha'*, translated "transgression"; this is only used fourteen times in the Psalms.¹ In xxxvi. 1 (2 in Hebr.) transgression is personified: *Transgression saith to the wicked in the midst of his heart . . .*² The root-idea of this word is clear from the use of the verb, which always means "to rebel," so, e.g., in Isa. i. 2, and often elsewhere. The underlying idea of the word is, therefore, the act of setting oneself in opposition to God; it is more directly positive in its meaning than either *Chatt'ath* or '*Avôn*'. The meaning is well brought out in v. 10 (11 in Hebr.):

*Thrust them out in the multitude of their transgressions,
For they have rebelled against thee.*

iv. Besides the terms already referred to there are a few others which only occur

¹ The verb occurs twice; in xxxvii. 38, li. 13 (15 in Hebr.); in each case it is the participle which is used.

² Perhaps better: *An oracle of Transgression [revealeth itself] to the wicked in the midst of his heart.*

rarely; these may be briefly enumerated. *Resha'* ("Wickedness") is used six times, v. 4, x. 15; in xlv. 7, it occurs as the direct opposite of "righteousness"; and there are also the phrases: "tents of wickedness" (lxxxiv. 10), "sceptre of wickedness" (cxxv. 3), and "deeds of wickedness" (cxli. 4).¹ The verb is only found four times in the Psalms. Once we have *Ra'* ("Badness"), occurring in this sense, only in xxviii. 44. The word '*Asham*' ("offence," or "guilt") occurs twice, in lxviii. 21 (22 in Hebr.) and lxix. 5 (6 in Hebr.); the verbal forms, "to declare guilty" (v. 10 [11 in Hebr.]), and "to be held guilty" (xxxiv. 21, 22 [22, 3 in Hebr.]) are also used. Lastly, there is the word *Shegi'ah* (to be read, probably, *Shegîgah*, but the meaning is the same in either case), which occurs once, in xix. 12 (13 in Hebr.), and means "error," but an error inadvertently committed; this is also the meaning of the verb from the same root, which in the Psalms is found only in cxix. 10, 21, 67, 118; as a reference to Lev. v. 18,

¹ From the same root comes *Rasha'*, the "wicked" man, used over and over again both in the sing. and plur.; it is the antithesis of *Zadik*, the "righteous" man.

² See further, on this very significant word, the writer's *The Jewish Doctrine of Mediation*, pp. 25 ff.

Num. xv. 28, will show, the meaning is "to err in ignorance."

These details are, no doubt, somewhat dry reading ; but they will, nevertheless, it is hoped, be not without some use as references for those who desire to make a somewhat more careful study of the subject. At any rate, this preliminary investigation will have shown that the general conception of Sin is expressed in manifold form in the Psalms.

We proceed now to study the subject of Sin itself, as contained in the Psalms ; and it will conduce to clearness if we divide up our matter under various headings.

II. THE ORIGIN OF SIN.

It may well be thought, at first sight, that it is futile to seek for any teaching concerning the origin of Sin in the Psalms ; direct teaching on the point will, it is true, be sought in vain ; but, in view of the later Jewish teaching on the subject, there are some passages which certainly deserve some consideration. In the two centuries which preceded the beginning of the Christian era much speculation arose concerning the Future Life, and the

condition of the departed in the world to come ; it was obvious here that the question should have arisen as to the difference of the state of the righteous and the wicked in the Hereafter ; this, again, necessitated the contemplation of the fact, and existence, of Sin in this world, together with speculations concerning the nature and origin of Sin. We find, therefore, in post-Biblical Jewish literature a large amount of material in which theories are propounded as to how Sin first came into existence ; these theories all had their points of attachment in Old Testament passages, from which they developed. Some of these passages are to be found in the Psalms, if, indeed, one or two of the passages do not themselves reflect the later mental processes. We shall come to these presently.

§ i. It is, however, necessary first of all to lay stress on the fact that, in general, the existence of Sin is taken for granted, without any attempt to account for it. The apparent incongruity between the prosperity of the wicked and the misfortunes of the righteous¹ caused heart-searchings ; but there was the fact ; and it was recognized as being one of

¹ See further below on this subject, pp. 180 ff.

the inevitable factors of life in this world. The psalmists again and again call upon God to destroy the sinners; comfort is taken in the thought that their time is short; exultation is expressed at their downfall; but through it all, with a few exceptions, Sin and sinners are regarded as among the things that always have been, and always are. This is all so obvious that there will be no need to emphasize it further by quoting passages; it will suffice to refer, e.g., to xiv. 1-6, which offers a good illustration of what has been said.

§ ii. But from a few passages it is evident that the belief was held that Sin originated in man quite apart from the action of any extraneous influence. This seems to be implied in lviii. 3 (4 in Hebr.):

*The wicked are estranged [i.e. from what is
good] from the womb,
They go astray as soon as they be born,
speaking lies.*

The reference is to Sin which is innate in man, as belonging to his nature. The correctness of this interpretation is, indeed, disputed by some modern commentators; thus, Briggs, in writing on the passage,¹ says: "This

¹ *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Psalms* ("International Critical Commentary"), ii. p. 43.

does not refer, as older interpreters thought, to the impulses of original sin or innate depravity; but specifically to the *wicked* in antithesis to the 'righteous,' v. 12. They begin the practice of their wickedness in their earliest youth." By "original sin" Professor Briggs does not, of course, mean what the theological term "Original Sin" connotes; that is unknown to the Old Testament, as well as to later Judaism. It may, however, be questioned whether there is not something to be said for the view of the "older interpreters"; it is certainly worth observing that the verse which immediately follows runs:

*Their poison is like the poison of a serpent,
They are like the adder that is deaf, and
stoppeth his ear.*

The analogy between the poison of the serpent and the poison of the wicked would imply that the latter was innate, like the former. But this interpretation would not be pressed were it not for the teaching on Sin of later Judaism, which is always, in the first instance, based on Biblical passages, and which is always, likewise, the development of

Biblical teaching ; in addition to this, there is the fact, generally recognized at the present day, that numberless passages in the Old Testament have been adapted to the more developed beliefs of later ages ; this has probably been the case with the Psalms more than with any other of the Old Testament books, owing to their having been adapted for liturgical use. It is in the light of post-Biblical Jewish teaching that a passage like the one before us should be examined. In his comment on this verse, Dean Kirkpatrick¹ pointedly refers to Gen. viii. 21 : *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth* ; the word translated "imagination" here, namely, *Yetzer*, has played a great part in later Jewish theology ; but, whatever the exact meaning of the word as used in this Genesis passage, it at any rate refers to evil as being something which is innate in the heart of man, and, in so far, confirms what seems to be the teaching in the verse from the Psalms which we are considering ; that is to say, the verse is one of those which teach that the origin of Sin is to be found in man. That this was one of the theories as to the origin of Sin in

¹ *The Psalms* (Cambridge Bible), p. 328.

post-Biblical Jewish literature can be seen from the following quotations :

In *Ecclus.* xv. 14-18, according to the recently found Hebrew, it is written :

*God created man from the beginning,
And placed (lit. "gave") him in the hand of
his Yetzer.¹*

*If thou (so) desirest, thou canst keep the com-
mandment,*

*And (it is) wisdom to do his good pleasure.
Poured out before thee (are) fire and water,
Stretch out thine hand unto that which thou
desirest.*

*Life and Death (are) before man,
That which he desireth shall be given to him.*

It is true, that here Sin is, from one point of view, represented as being extraneous to man—*Life and Death (are) before man*—but the origin of Sin in man is clearly taught by the words : . . . *And placed him in the hand of his Yetzer.² If thou (so) desirest, thou canst keep the commandment.* In *The Book of Enoch*, xcvi. 4, the origin of Sin in man is quite definitely stated in the words : *Sin hath not been sent upon the earth, but man*

¹ This word means in post-Biblical Jewish theology, "inclination," "bias," or "tendency."

² *Yetzer* is not used here necessarily in a bad sense.

himself hath created it. It is not necessary to illustrate this further, though plenty of other quotations from this class of literature could be given. The later Rabbinical speculations concerning the *Yetzer* witness abundantly to the conviction that Sin is inherent in humanity, though, as will be seen presently, the Rabbis did not always hold that the origin of Sin was to be sought in man.¹

While, therefore, it must be granted that the passage from the Psalms which we are considering is ambiguous as to the underlying idea contained in it, it may be claimed that, in the light of later teaching, it seems to contain the germ of the doctrine that Sin originates with man. In any case, it is nowhere taught in the Psalms that the temptation to commit sin comes from the devil. In connection with what has been said, a reference must be made to vii. 14 :

*Behold he travaileth with iniquity,
He hath conceived mischief, and brought forth
falsehood.*

Here again, the analogy suggests the bringing forth of something that existed previously

¹ This subject is dealt with in Oesterley and Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue* (2nd ed.), chap. xii.

within. There is one other passage which must be briefly considered under this heading, li. 5 (7 in Hebr.):

*Behold, I was born in iniquity ('avôn),
And in sin did my mother conceive me.*

The innate evil in man is the truth which is clearly expressed here; it may, or may not, be that the psalmist intends to plead this in extenuation of his sinning against God—commentators differ in their opinion as to this—but the fact that Sin is in man seems unquestionably to be what the passage teaches. Briggs maintains that the reference is not to “the iniquity of the parent, or to an iniquitous condition of the infant when brought forth”; but contends that “the poet here alludes to the historic origin of the nation in their patriarchal ancestors, as in Isa. xliii. 27 (*Thy first father sinned, and thine interpreters* [i.e. false prophets] *have transgressed against me*); their first father committed sin, and all his posterity since his day have followed him in transgression.”¹ It must be confessed that the reasoning is somewhat difficult to follow here; it seems

¹ *Op. cit.* ii. p. 6.

more in accordance with the meaning of the verse as it stands, to recognize frankly, with Gunkel, that "we must see in passages like these the preparation for the New Testament doctrine of Original Sin"; and he goes on to say: "Ancient Israel does not believe in an absolute corruption of Human Nature, but it postulates only a tendency towards sinning."¹ But, as he says elsewhere, "Sinning cleaves to him by nature."

The teaching of the passages so far considered, therefore, is that, when man sins, it is from, and of, himself that he does so; the origin of his evil-doing is in himself, and this both as regards source and action. In so far as evil is part of his nature, man is a helpless and passive victim, and in so far as he obeys its baneful influence, he is its active agent; but the *fons et origo* is in man.²

§ iii. There is one passage which, at any rate, adumbrates teaching, which was at one time vigorously combated, but which in later times was accepted by the exponents of

¹ *Ausgewählte Psalmen*, p. 115.

² Cp. lxxix. 8: *Remember not against us the iniquity of our forefathers*; whether in a man, or in his ancestors, it is *in* man that sin arises,

official Judaism—the teaching, namely, that evil originates with God. The passage is cxli. 4 :

*Incline not my heart to any evil thing,
To be occupied in deeds of wickedness.*

The converse of this is found in cxix. 36, where the same word for "incline" is used, (and where, in the second clause of the verse, a similar thought to the above is found) :

*Incline my heart unto thy testimonies,
And not to covetousness.*

In these two passages the "inclination" is thought of as being caused by God ; but there are other passages in the Old Testament where the same word for "to incline" is used, and in which man is represented as causing the "inclination" ;¹ so that there is no ambiguity in the meaning of the word in the two passages from the Psalms before us. Both the psalms in question are generally acknowledged to be of late date, belonging perhaps to the Greek, or even to the Maccabæan period, so that we are justified in taking into account the thought-tendencies of the time, or of times slightly later, as reflected in other books. From

¹ Cp. Judg. xxiv. 23, 2 Sam. xix. 14 (15 in Hebr.), Prov. ii. 2, xxi. 1.

these books it is perfectly clear that sharp differences of opinion existed as to whether, or not, God was to be regarded as the original Creator of Sin. In *Ecclesiasticus* we have, in xv. 11-15, a polemic against the contention that God is the author of Sin :

*Say not : " From God is my transgression,"
For that which he hateth he made not.
Say not : "(It is) he that made me to stumble,"
For there is no need of evil men.
Evil and abomination doth the Lord hate,
And he doth not let it come nigh to them that fear
him.¹*

This shows that there were those who held the contrary view. On the other hand, in *Ecclus.* xxxiii. 15, occurs the following :

*Good is set against evil, and life against death ;
So is the godly against the sinner.
Thus look upon all the works of the Most High ;
There are two and two, one against another.²*

That these antitheses are all spoken of as " the works of the Most High," seems to imply

¹ Cf. Jas. i. 13, 14 : *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God ; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man ; but each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.*

² The Hebrew of this passage is not extant.

the belief that evil was created by God ; it is, at any rate, certain that at a, comparatively speaking, early period, the teaching must have been put forth which became crystallized in Midrashic and Talmudic writings ; for in these we find it often definitely stated that God, as the Creator of all things, created evil. This is said in the Midrash *Bereshith Rabba*, xxvii., while in the *Yalkut Shimeoni Beresh*, xliv., God is represented as saying: "I grieve that I created man of earthly substance ; for had I created him of heavenly substance he would not have rebelled against me" ; or, again, in the Babylonian Talmud, *Kiddushin* 30^b, it is said: "I created an evil tendency (*Yetzer*) ; I created for him (i.e. for man, in order to counteract the evil tendency) the Law as a means of healing. If ye occupy yourselves with the Law, ye will not fall into the power of it (i.e. of the evil tendency)." There are many other passages to the same effect.

We must, therefore, at the least, reckon with the possibility that in the two passages from the Psalms under consideration the thought is contained that the bias towards evil comes from God.¹

¹ Cp. Job i. 10-12.

In the Psalms, then, while the existence of Sin is taken for granted, there is very little speculation as to its origin. The fault of sinning is always ascribed to man, so much so that in some passages the belief seems to be implied that its origin is to be found in man. In a very few instances the teaching that the original tendency to sin comes from God seems to be implicitly implied.

III. THE ESSENCE OF SIN.

That which, in the Psalms, constitutes the essence of Sin is, first and foremost, the conscious and wilful setting-up of oneself against God. This takes a variety of forms.

§ i. First, there is that of personal insult to God. This, in its worst aspect, takes the form of denying that God is the champion of right and righteousness ; in x. 4, it is said :

*The wicked, in the pride of his countenance,
(saith), " He will not require it " ;
All his thoughts are, " There is no God."*

The words, " There is no God," do not mean that God is non-existent ; it is not an atheistic position which is here described ; the words

express, though in a very different spirit, the same thought as that uttered in the first verse of the psalm :

Why standest thou afar off, O Lord ?

Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble ?

Whereas the godly man, in perplexity, wonders why God permits the persecution of the helpless—though his profession of faith is contained in verse 5—the wicked maintain, in effect, that God does not intervene, “is not there,” for the simple reason that the triumph of wickedness does not matter to Him. The same thought is present in xiv. 1 (cp. liii. 1) :

The fool hath said in his heart, “There is no God.”

The verse goes on to describe the doings of the wicked, which are accomplished with impunity ; and it is for this reason that the “fool” (better, “impudent” man) supposes that his doings are indifferent to God ; he denies, in effect, the ethical purity of God. A good commentary on the attitude here portrayed is contained in l. 21 :

*These things hast thou done, and I kept silence ;
Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an
one as thyself ;*

(But) I will convict thee and set (the matter) before thine eyes.

Another passage which graphically describes the essential wickedness of the ungodly is X. II-13 :

*He saith in his heart, " God hath forgotten,
He hideth his face, he will never see it " . . .
Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God,
And say in his heart, " Thou wilt not require
it ? "*

Cp. also cxxxix. 20.

These passages express clearly what is the most serious aspect of Sin—the attitude of mind which regards God as acquiescing in what is wrong, and thus virtually imputes sin to Him ; this can only be paralleled by the similar spirit spoken of by our Lord in Mark iii. 29, 30 : . . . *But whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin ; because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.*

§ ii. Secondly, there is the wilful transgression of God's testimonies and commandments. This constitutes, though in a less degree, a personal insult to God, because it is a deliberate contempt for what He requires. For

example, in xii. 4 (5 in Hebr.), the ungodly are represented as saying :

*To our tongue will we give strength,
Our lips are our own ; who is lord over us ?*

How transgression against the divine precepts is seen to be truly affecting the very Personality of God is expressed in a somewhat anthropomorphic, but very realistic, way in xiv. 2, 3 (cp. liii. 2, 3) :

*The Lord looked down from heaven upon the
children of men,
To see if there were any that would deal
wisely,
That did seek after God.
(But) they are all gone aside ; they are alto-
gether become filthy,
There is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Again, transgression is described as taking the place of divine inspiration in the heart of the wicked, and thus banishing from it the recognition of God ; xxxvi. 1 :

*An oracle of Transgression [revealeth itself]
to the wicked in the midst of his heart,
(So that) there is no fear of God before his
eyes.*

The distance between God and the wicked

is such that even the semblance of an acknowledgement of Him by them is rebuked ; Sin creates such a gulf between God and those who practise it that there cannot be the faintest communion between them ; see, e.g., l. 16 ff. :

*But unto the wicked God saith,
 " What hast thou to do to declare my statutes,
 And that thou hast taken my covenant in thy
 mouth ?
 Seeing thou hatest correction,
 And castest my words behind thee. . . . "*

This thought of the distance between God and the followers of Sin, together with the inevitable punishment of these, is brought out again in lxxiii. 27 :

*For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish ;
 Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring
 from thee.*

In more abstract form the antagonism that exists between God and Sin is seen in the words of xciv. 20 :

*Can the throne of wickedness¹ have fellowship
 with thee,
 Which frameth mischief by statute.*

¹ Lit. a yawning gulf = " Destruction " or " Ruin " ; cp. lvii. 1 (2 in Hebr.).

These and other similar passages teach that the transgression of God's commands involves an insult to Him, it constitutes an act which touches the honour of God.

§ iii. In the next place, sin against the godly, as belonging to God, is scarcely less sinful than the direct insulting of God Himself; see, e.g., xiv. 4-6 :

Have they no knowledge, all the workers of iniquity?

*Who eat up my people, as they eat bread.¹
There were they in great fear,
For God is in the generation of the righteous.
Ye put to shame the counsel of the poor,
Because² the Lord (is) his refuge.*

The psalmist feels justified in calling upon God to punish the wicked who oppress the afflicted, because the harm done to these is sin against God ; this is brought out in x. 12-15 :

*Arise, O Lord ; O God lift up thine hand,
Forget not the meek.
Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God,
And say in his heart, " Thou wilt not require
(it) ? "*

¹ The Hebrew text of this clause does not appear to be in order.

² Or " But."

*Thou hast seen travail and grief, thou beholdest
 (it) to requite it with thy hand ;
 Upon thee the helpless leaveth it [i.e. the
 requiting],
 And (as for) the fatherless, thou hast been his
 helper.¹
 Break thou the arm of the wicked,
 And (as for) the evil man, seek out his wicked-
 ness, till thou find none.*

What man calls upon God to do here is elsewhere represented as, in any case, His intention ; xii. 5 (6 in Hebr.) :

*“ For the spoiling of the poor, for the sighing of
 the needy,
 Now will I arise,” saith the Lord,
 “ I will place him in the safety he panteth for.”*

The identification, which is frequently implied, between the enemies of the godly and the enemies of God, should be borne in mind when reading the so-called “ imprecatory ” psalms ; it may, to some extent, be urged in extenuation of the cruel spirit displayed in these. That it is not always personal vengeance which is sought, but, at

¹ The Hebrew text of this clause is uncertain.

any rate, in some cases the expression of a real zeal for God's honour, can be seen from the psalmist's words in cxxxix. 21, 22 :

*Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee ?
And do not I loathe them that rise up
against thee ?
I hate them with a perfect hatred ;
I count them mine (own) enemies.*

It is this identification between the enemies of God and the enemies of the godly which, in some measure, must account for an element in the doctrine of Sin in the Psalms which, indeed, is characteristic of the Old Testament as a whole ; namely, that there is no differentiation between Sin and sinners. Sin does not exist apart from its exhibition in the sinner ; there is no principle of evil ; what constitutes Sin are sinful acts, individual acts of rebellion against God, and against those who love Him ; and therefore if these acts are refrained from, and the positive precepts of God are observed, the possibility is by no means excluded of the servants of God being all that He can require ; see, for example, such a passage as the following, in which what has been said is well illustrated, both as regards the non-differentiation be-

tween Sin and sinners, and the (implied) perfection of the godly man, v. 4-7 :

For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness,

The evil man shall not sojourn with thee,

The arrogant shall not stand in thy sight ;

Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

Thou shalt destroy them that speak lies ;

The Lord abhorreth the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

But as for me, in the multitude of thy loving-kindness, will I come into thy house ;

In fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

From what has been said, it will be clear that by the essence of Sin in the Psalms something very different is taught from what the New Testament teaches on the subject. While Sin involves separation from God, and the sinner is debarred from fellowship with Him, the godly can, by his observance of the Law and of the commandments of God, secure for himself a state of perfect justification in the sight of God ; so much so that he regards himself as belonging to an entirely different category from that of the sinners. This, indeed, is what must strike every careful reader of the Psalms, namely, the fundamental differentiation be-

tween the godly and the sinners therein portrayed.¹ We shall have to return to this in § IV. ; in the meantime it is well to bear in mind that in this respect the doctrine of Sin in the Psalms shows a marked difference from the fuller recognition of the universality of Sin, that is to say, the deeper apprehension of Sinfulness which is taught in the Christian Church ; the words of St. Paul in Rom. iii., 20-24, are well worth pondering in this connection :

“ Because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight ; for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin. But now, apart from the law, a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe ; for there is no distinction ; *for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God* ; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

IV. THE SENSE OF SIN.

It may be confidently asserted that in no literature that the world has ever known is the expression of the sense of Sin more

¹ Though this is the normal teaching in the Psalms, there are exceptional instances in which the universality of Sin in man is taught ; see below, iv. § i.

touchingly or more whole-heartedly set forth than in some of the psalms of the Hebrews ; and this in spite of the fact that the realization of the essence of Sin falls short of what the fuller revelation of God, as proclaimed in the New Testament, has taught men concerning the "exceeding sinfulness of Sin" (cp. Rom. vii. 13).

It has been sometimes claimed that the penitential psalms of the Babylonians offer a parallel to those of the Old Testament ; this parallel is purely superficial ; and, as far as real devotional feeling is concerned, comparison between the two is out of the question. Even for those who, like the present writer, are unable to read these Babylonian "penitential" psalms in the original form, it is possible to gain a clear idea of the spirit permeating them from the excellent translations which have been published ;¹ the perusal of a large number of these convinces one of the truth contained in the words of one of the foremost living Assyriologists, when he says : "From the examples here offered in this department of Babylonian-Assyrian literature, the conclusion is gained that there can be no question of a direct influence of Babylonian-Assyrian prayers of plaint and penitence ("Klage- und Bussgebete") upon the like products of the

¹ E.g. Morris Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, ii. pp. 1-137 ; Zimmern, *Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete*, in "Der alte Orient," vii. Heft. 3 ; Otto Weber, *Die Literatur der Babylonier und Assyrier*, pp. 114-146.

Bible. The penitential spirit, though emphasized in a striking manner in some of these prayers, is not the essential feature ; this is to be sought rather in the plaint itself. A secondary feature which comes into consideration is the prayer that the divine wrath may cease ; while the element of penitence itself only appears in the third place. On the other hand, in those Biblical psalms which are reckoned among the penitential ones, the main stress is laid upon humility and penitence in the sight of the righteous Creator of the universe. Moreover, the whole conception of penitence is, in the Biblical psalms, of an entirely different character ; for the penitent, in giving vent to his religious emotions, starts from the conviction that the Deity, Who points to a righteous manner of life as the supreme object of religion, is Himself filled with the feeling of absolute righteousness. According to the prophetic-monotheistic conception of the world, which constitutes the basis of the Biblical psalms, the Creator can only act in accordance with the law of righteousness. In view of such ideas there can be no question of divine arbitrariness. Even when one takes the question of ritual offences into consideration, it is still the fact that the transgressions, which in the Psalms call forth the sense of sin, are, generally speaking, in the domain of morals ; while, in the Babylonian-Assyrian psalms the conditions are exactly reversed, for in them Sin, whether conscious or not, consists, in the main, in errors of ceremonial in the sight of the gods. It is only the exception where reference is made to moral offences.”¹

¹ Morris Jastrow, *Op. cit.*, p. 133.

Let us now turn to some passages in the Psalms, and see how the Sense of Sin is there portrayed.

§ i. It is well to note, first of all, that in some exceptional cases the universality of Sin is taught ; this is not, as we have seen, the normal teaching of the Psalms ; but in dealing with the subject of the Sense of Sin, this exceptional teaching must be taken into account, otherwise we should be ignoring a striking element in it.

In cxliii. 2, the psalmist sings :

*Enter not into judgement with thy servant,
For in thy sight shall no man living be
justified.*

It is not surprising that this verse should have been chosen as one of the " Sentences from Scripture " with which the Church's Daily Services commence, for it anticipates, and essentially accords with, Christian teaching.

The same truth, though in a modified form, is, in some sense, implied in the recognition of the sins of the forefathers, the results of which were seen to be entailed upon their descendants ; so, for example, in lxxix. 8 :

Remember not against us the iniquities of our forefathers ;

*Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us,
For we are brought very low.*

The community of sinfulness between the forefathers and the descendants is very pointedly brought out in cvi. 6, 7 :

*We have sinned with our fathers,
We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.*

Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt,

*They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies,
But were rebellious at the sea, even the Red Sea.¹*

Not only is Sin thus acknowledged to be widespread, but it is realized that God sees all iniquity :

Thou hast set our iniquities before thee.

Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance (xc. 8, cp. xliv. 21).

So that the penitent sinner must perforce cry :

Who can discern his errors ?

Absolve me from hidden (faults) (xix. 12 [13 in Hebr.]).

¹ Cp. the whole psalm, and see lxxviii. 7 ff.

§ ii. This leads us on to the more specific *confession of sins* in the sight of God, which is of the essence of the Sense of Sin. Pregnant with meaning are the words in xxxviii. 4 (5 in Hebr.) :

*For mine iniquities have gone over my head,
As an heavy burden they are too heavy for
me.*

The psalmist, in the outpouring of his heart, cares little how he piles up his metaphors so long as he can disburden himself of the horrible weight upon him, through the acknowledgement of his guilt. He first likens his iniquities to an overflowing flood which threatens to engulf him ; this metaphor, for expressing the overwhelming nature of Sin, is used elsewhere in the Psalms ; in xviii. 4, for example, it says :

The floods of ungodliness made me afraid.

The same thought is elaborated in lxix, 1, 2, where the context (verse 5) shows that the reference is to Sin :

*Save me, O God ;
For the waters are come in unto my soul.*

*I sink in the deep mire, where there is no
standing,
I am come into deep waters, where the floods
overflow me.*

The psalmist, then (in xxxviii. 4), abruptly changes the metaphor, and compares his sins to a burden too heavy for him to bear; the metaphor is a significant one, for it implies the recognition of the need of one who is stronger than he to lift the load from off him. In the same psalm the penitent realizes that, with confession, repentance must go hand in hand :

*For I am ready to halt,
And my sorrow is continually before me ;
For I will declare mine iniquity ;
I will be sorry for my sin (verses 17, 18).*

In another psalm, in which, however, the psalmist is speaking in the name of his nation, the manifold sins of the people are likened to a countless multitude, xl. 12 (13 in Hebr) :

*For wickednesses surrounded me until (they
were) without number,
Mine iniquities took hold of me, so that I
was not able to see,*

More numerous were they than the hairs of my head, and my strength (lit. "my heart") hath forsaken me.

Of a more individual character, and important from another point of view, is xli. 4 (5 in Hebr.):

*I said, O Lord, have mercy upon me ;
Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.*

Sin is here represented as a disease ; this is clear from the use of the word "heal" (*rapha*'), which is the regular word for healing ordinary sickness ; in Gen. 1. 2, for example, the participle is used, and means "a physician" ; it is, however, frequently used metaphorically in the sense of forgiveness, so in Ps. xxx. 2 :

*O Lord, my God,
I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me
(cp. cvii. 20).*

Closely connected with this is the belief, to which we shall have to refer again later on, that the consequences of Sin entail disease on the sinner, a disease which God alone can

cure; this is brought out with great clearness in ciii. 2-4:

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits ;
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,
Who healeth all thy diseases ;
Who redeemeth thy life from the Pit,
Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness
and tender mercies.*

In every case the desire for "healing" is an implicit confession of sinfulness. But the most pointed example of the Sense of Sin, in which the recognition of sinfulness, the acknowledgement and confession of sins, as well as the yearning for divine forgiveness, are all expressed, is, of course, li. 1-4 (3-6 in Hebr.):

*Be gracious unto me, O God, according to thy
lovingkindness,
According to the multitude of thy mercies blot
out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
For I am conscious of my transgression,
And my sin is continually confronting me.
Against thee, against thee only, have I sinned,
And committed the wickedness,—in thy sight.*

It is noteworthy here that the penitent

recognizes his sinfulness in the sight of God to partake of a threefold nature—"iniquity" ('*avôn*), a turning out of the right way, and thus consisting of a course of unrighteousness; "sin" (*chatt'ath*), a missing of the mark which should be the aim of right living in God's sight; and "transgression" (*pesha'*), the act of rebellion against God.¹ And just as the deep realization of his sin causes the psalmist to describe it in its fulness, from every point of view, so also is the depth of his yearning that the sin might be taken away, and he uses three words to express the obliteration of sin. "Blot out" (*mâchâh*; the word occurs again in verse 9 [11 in Hebr.]); this word is used to express two things, though they are allied in meaning; in Isa. xxv. 8, it occurs in the sense of "wiping away" tears from the face (cp. also 2 Kings xxi. 13: Prov. xxx. 20); in the passage before us it refers, more probably, to the "effacing" of the sinner's record in the book of God; in Exod. xxxii. 32, 33, Moses says: . . . *and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book*

¹ The three words are also used together in xxxii. 1, 2, where likewise three words for the obliteration of sin are used, though they are different from those used in the passage before us.

which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. The same idea occurs in the New Testament, Col. ii. 14 : . . . *having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us* (cp. Acts iii. 19) ; still more pointed in Rev. iii. 5 : *And I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life.* The second word used is “wash” (*kâbas*) ; this root occurs in Lev. xiii. 55, of a plague being “washed out” ; also in Lev. xiv., frequently, of washing the person after recovery from leprosy ; so that we have here again the idea of Sin being a disease. And lastly “cleans” (*tâhâr*), which, like the preceding word, is a term largely used in the Levitical ritual, e.g. Lev. xiii. 6, 34, and elsewhere, in reference to the cleansing from leprosy.

It will be instructive to refer briefly here to the general idea of “washing” or “cleansing,” according to the Levitical Ritual, for it will show (by way of contrast) to what an advance in spiritual conception the Psalms bear witness. Two passages come mainly into consideration :

Num. viii. 7, 8 : Before the Levites were fit to enter upon their duties, there were certain ceremonies to be gone through, which were believed to have the effect of cleansing them from their sins. They had first to be sprinkled with the “waters of

expiation" (lit. "waters of sin"); then they had to shave and wash; after that they had to offer up a "sin-offering," i.e. an offering which took away sin. There can be little doubt that we have here an instance of duplication to make certainty doubly sure. The water took away the sin, but to make certain, in such special cases as the sanctification of the Levites to their holy office, a sin-offering *also* was offered. The two were analogous rites, as their name implies; viz. "waters of sin" means water that takes away sin, "sin-offering" means an offering that takes away sin.

Lev. xiv. 1-32: Without going into details, it will be found, on reading this passage, that the recovered leper had, among other things, to wash in "living" water, and to offer a sin-offering. This, in the case of a leper, was of still greater significance than in the example just given, inasmuch as leprosy was *par excellence* the symbol of Sin, and, like other chastisements, regarded as the result of Sin. The recovered leper, according to this passage, had a long series of purifications to go through before the taint of sin could be removed. This passage is especially instructive, because it is not the leprosy itself from which the man was being cleansed, for in verses 3 and 4 the directions given are: . . . *and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper, then shall the priest command . . .*; that is to say, the actual physical disease had departed before this cleansing process was undertaken. It would seem that the invisible *taint of sin* (as distinct from its visible manifestation), on account of which the divine visitation, in the shape of leprosy, had overtaken

the man, was that which the cleansing process was intended to purify, for the man could not enter into God's presence for worship until he had washed, etc. (Cp. Oesterley and Box, *Op. cit.*, chap. xiii.).

In Psalm li. the old technical terms are used, but their meaning has become wholly spiritualized.

It is characteristic of the deep sincerity which pervades the psalmist's words that he realizes the fact that, although he himself has only now come to be conscious of the real nature of his sinfulness, he nevertheless recognizes that God has known it all along ; this becomes clear when one notices that the cry to God for forgiveness comes first, and then the words "For I," expressed in the emphatic way in the original, "am conscious (lit. 'know') of my transgression." It is also significant that, although the sin which has been committed was against a man, as is clear from verse 14 (16 in Hebr.), this is yet so emphatically described as having been against God ; this witnesses to an intense realization of Sin ; transgression against the second commandment of the Law, which is, "like unto" the first (cp. Matt. xxii. 36-40) is, in reality, the breaking of the first.

Further, the psalmist lays stress on another

element in the true Sense of Sin ; confession of guilt leads the way to the knowledge of the mind of God ; the realization of individual sinfulness gives a deeper insight into the awful chasm which separates between the sinner, and the purity, and holiness, and majesty of God ; then the void in the heart of the penitent becomes a sense of horror, and it comes upon him like a flash what is really wanted, what only can fill that void :

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.

No man can have the knowledge of God unless the truth of God is in his heart ; therefore the psalmist continues :

And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom ;

by wisdom is meant “ the fear of the Lord ” (see cxi. 10). But the truth, and knowledge, and fear of God can only be properly apprehended by the heart made clean by God, so the psalmist continues :

*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow
(verse 7 [9 in Hebr.]).*

The language is again figurative, and borrowed from Lev. xiv, where the ceremonial for the cleansing of the leper is described ; "hyssop" was a small plant which grew out of the wall, according to 1 Kings iv. 33, (v. 13 in Hebr.), where it is contrasted with the cedar that is in Lebanon ; a bunch of this was used as a sprinkler. According to Exod. xii. 22, the blood was sprinkled on the doorposts with a bunch of hyssop. The use of the term here is, therefore, full of significance, for the psalmist calls upon God to bring about the inward and spiritual cleansing which the priest in the Levitical ritual could only do outwardly.

A final stage in the upward path of the penitent is the desire for, and resolve of, permanent amendment of life ; but, again, this is unattainable by human effort, however strenuous it may be ; God alone can incline the heart and bend the stubborn spirit to sustained striving ; so the psalmist prays :

*Create for me a clean heart, O God ;
And renew a steadfast spirit within me ;
Cast me not away from thy presence,
And take not thy holy spirit from me* (verses
10, 11, [12, 13 in Hebr.]).

To abide in the presence of God, and to be upheld by His Spirit, this alone can save the sinner from spiritual death (cp. xix. 13, cxix. 176).

This wonderful psalm, revealing as it does the innermost recesses of the penitent's heart, demands far more minute and careful study than we have space for here; besides, it would take us too far afield, as our object is only to point out the chief elements of the doctrine of Sin in the Psalms.

One final passage must be quoted under this heading, both because it refers to confession of sin, and also because it witnesses to one other element in the Sense of Sin, namely, the fear which the true penitent feels lest his sin should be the means of harming others, lxix. 5, 6 (6, 7 in Hebr.):

*O God, thou knowest my foolishness,
And my guiltinesses are not hid from thee,
Let not them that wait on thee be ashamed through
me, O Lord God of hosts,
Let not them that seek thee be brought to
dishonour through me, O God of Israel.*

V. THE SENSE OF INNOCENCE.

It must strike one at first sight as incongruous to find that while, on the one hand,

the expression of the Sense of Sin is so pronounced, there should, on the other, be many passages in which assertions of innocence are equally strongly expressed. Let us begin by giving some examples, and then seek to account for this attitude.

§ i. In vii. 3-5, there are some words which seem to amount to a challenge to God to deliver the speaker to his enemies if any wickedness is found in him :

*O Lord my God, if I have done this ;
 If there be any iniquity in my hands ;
 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at
 peace with me . . .
 (Then) let the enemy pursue my soul, and
 overtake it ;
 Yea, let him tread my life down to the earth,
 And lay my glory in the dust.*

In verse 8 (9 in Hebr.) of the same psalm, the psalmist contrasts the divine judging of the Gentiles with that which will be accorded to him :

*The Lord ministereth judgement to the peoples ;
 Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness,
 and to mine integrity within (lit.
 upon) me (cp. xxvi. 1, 2 ; xliii. 1).*

In another passage God is called upon to witness that He has found nothing amiss in His servant after having examined his heart, xvii. 3 :

*Thou hast proved my heart, thou hast visited
me in the night,
Thou hast tried me, and findest no evil
purpose in me ;
My mouth shall not transgress.*

In a number of other passages this sense of innocence is expressed in even more emphatic terms ; but, as in these there is also contained one, at all events, of the main reasons for this attitude, we can consider them in connection with our attempt to account for such a feeling of self-righteousness.

§ ii. To the psalmist the reward which has been accorded to him by God is a proof that he has acted in accordance with the divine will ; the knowledge of this brings home to him the conviction that he *must* be righteous. Duty well fulfilled naturally and rightly arouses in the heart the feeling of satisfaction ; the joy of right-doing is part of its reward. The consciousness of acting as we believe God would have us act proclaims a man to be a righteous man ; he cannot hide it

from himself; consequently he glories in the sense of righteousness. This is clearly the mental attitude of the writer when he says, in xviii. 20-24 (21-25 in Hebr.):

The Lord rewardeth me according to my righteousness,

According to the cleanness of my hands doth he recompense me.

*Because I have observed the ways of the Lord,
And have not done wickedly (in departing)
from my God.*

*For all his judgements are before me,
And (as for) his statutes, I do not depart
from them;*

*Yea, I was perfect (in my dealings) with him,
And kept myself from mine iniquity.*

The words "judgements" and "statutes" refer, as always, to the precepts of the Law; to fulfil these resulted in becoming perfect in the sight of God. It is here, therefore, that we find one line of explanation of what often strikes us now-a-days as an unwarrantable assertion of righteousness. For us, this assertion would undoubtedly be unwarrantable, for a reason to be given presently; but to impute to the psalmists in those days a spirit of unjustifiable self-righteousness is an entire misapprehension of the religious

conditions of the times. Twofold action, one positive and one negative (though this latter is really involved in the former), constituted the whole duty of man ; the positive action was that expressed in the last quotation, namely, the fulfilment of the precepts of the Law ; the other is referred to in the following words, xlv. 20, 21 :

*If we have forgotten the name of our God,
Or spread forth our hands to a strange god,
Shall not God search this out ?
For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*

To be instant in carrying out the Law of God, to turn the back on idolatry, this was righteousness ; he who did this did all that even God Himself could expect, and the reward could be demanded as of right. This position is perfectly consistent and logical, as far as it goes ; what we have to remember is that in those days this constituted the *whole* of the position. We do not tolerate a spirit of self-righteousness now-a-days, for two reasons—at least these ultimately lie at the base of whatever reasons we give utterance to—first, because we realize far more the part that divine grace plays in all human action, and secondly because we, in

consequence, do not assign undue power to the human will ; and there is a third reason which is expressed in these words : *When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants ; we have done that which it was our duty to do ;*¹ nothing more than that.

§ iii. There is another line of explanation to be given in reference to the Sense of Innocence which figures in some of the psalms. This is expressed in a clear way in xxvi. 1-5, where the psalmist first protests his innocence, and then, in verses 4 and 5, gives what is, at any rate, a contributory reason, for this :

Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity,

I have trusted also in the Lord without wavering.

Examine me, O Lord, and prove me ;

Try my reins and my heart.

For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes ;

And I have walked in thy truth.

I have not sat with vain persons,

Neither will I go in with dissemblers.

I hate the congregation of evil-doers,

And will not sit with the wicked (cp. ci. 3-8).

¹ Luke xvii. 10.

Here it will be seen at once that there enters in, implicitly, a comparison between the psalmist and the ungodly. This attitude is, obviously, a very dangerous one; but there was no sort of doubt that when the psalmist contrasted the evil life of the wicked with the whole-hearted desire to serve God, and the strenuous observance of the Law, of which he was conscious within himself, the difference was very great; the result was a conviction of innocence which was inevitable, and, to be frank, it was very natural.

The religious standard of the times, and the fact of the enormous difference between the devout psalmist and the ungodly men he saw about him—these are two considerations which must be given their due weight when reading passages in the Psalms in which the Sense of Innocence is expressed.

VI. THE RESULTS OF SIN.

In the Psalms the punishment of the wicked, as the result of their sins, is very frequently emphasized. But this punishment is of a twofold character. At one time it is temporal adversity, in varying forms, which is to overtake the wicked;

at another, the full punishment does not come until after death. This latter, we shall have to refer to again in Lecture III. There can be no doubt that these two conceptions of punishment for Sin reflect the ideas of different ages. The earlier belief, which regarded sickness and adversity as the visible manifestation of divine wrath for sin (cp. Isa. liii. 4), was seen to be not always in accordance with fact,¹ since the wicked were often in prosperity, while the righteous were no less often afflicted; it was a later development of belief when it became realized that punishment *hereafter* awaited the enemies of God.

Let us illustrate these two stages in the teaching concerning the results of Sin by a few quotations out of a large number that could be given.

§ i. Nothing could illustrate more clearly the teaching that bodily sickness is one form of punishment for sin than the words in xxxviii. 3 ff. (4 ff. in Hebr.):

*There is no soundness in my flesh because of
thine indignation,*

¹ It is not intended to imply that sickness and adversity are never the penalty for sin—very far from that; see the words of St. Paul in 1 Cor. xi. 29, 30.

*There is no rest in my bones because of my
sins ;
For mine iniquities have gone over my head,
As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.
My wounds stink and are corrupt,
Because of my foolishness. . . . (Cp. xxxi.
10, lxix. 22-25.)*

The same thought is expressed as clearly
in xxxix. 11 (12 in Hebr.) :

*With rebukes dost thou chasten man because
of iniquity.*

Adversity, as well as sickness, is one of
the results of Sin, e.g. xxv. 17, 18 :

*The troubles of my heart are enlarged ;¹
O bring me out of my distresses.
Consider my affliction and my travail ;
And forgive all my sins (cp. lxvii. 6 ; lxxxix.
30-32 ; ciii. 3 ; cvii. 17, 34 ; cxlvi. 9).*

These, and many similar passages, refer to
the results of Sin as experienced in this
world.

In the next place, punishment is meted
out to the wicked in that they are cut

¹ The reading here is uncertain ; the clause should proba-
bly be read : " The straitnesses of my heart enlarge thou,"
the words being a prayer for relief.

off from the enjoyments of life, so, for example, in xxxiv. 16 :

*The face of the Lord is against them that do evil,
To cut off the remembrance of them from the
earth (xxxvii. 12, 13, 38).*

These passages reflect the normal teaching both of the Psalms, and of the Old Testament generally, concerning the punishment of the wicked.

§ ii. But there are a certain number of passages in which a more developed teaching is found ; in these the punishment of Sin is not restricted to this life ; thus, in lv. 23, punishment consists not only in the cutting-off of the wicked in the midst of life, but also in further punishment hereafter :

*But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into
the Pit of destruction ;¹
Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live
out half their days.*

Still more pointed is lxix. 28 (29 in Hebr.) :

*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living,
And not be written with the righteous.*

¹ See further on this expression below, pp. 136, 140.

Cp. the words in Dan. xii. 1 : *And at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.* See further, on the Hereafter as a time of punishment for the wicked, Lecture III.

VII. THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

§ i. It will not be unprofitable to enumerate briefly the various words used in connection with the obliteration of Sin, for this will give us some clear insight into the general Old Testament idea of Forgiveness.

(a) *Nasa'*. This root means literally "to lift up," and also "to bear"; in the former sense the word occurs in Isa. v. 26 : *And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far.* Then it is used in the sense of lifting something up in order to carry it away; e.g. in 2 Sam. iv. 4, it is said of Jonathan's son : . . . *and his nurse took him up and fled* (cp. Gen. xxi. 18, Amos vi. 10). Here, therefore, we have the idea of the obliteration of Sin being brought about by its being *lifted off* the sinner; Sin is, as in xxxviii. 4, a burden weighing a man down. In the case of the second meaning, the idea is that of the Sin being carried by some one else; in this sense the word is

used in Isa. liii. 12, . . . *yet he bare the sin of many*, and also in Lev. xvi. 22, of the scape-goat : . . . *and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a solitary land*. These two meanings are very closely connected. This is probably the earliest word used for the taking away, i.e. the forgiving, of sins. It occurs in the Psalms in xxv. 18, xxxii. 1, 5, lxxxv. 2 (3 in Hebr.), xcix. 8, in the sense of "to forgive."

(b) *Kissah*. This word means, in the first place, simply "to cover," in the ordinary sense of the word (e.g. Gen. ix. 23, xxxviii. 15, in reference to the body and the face); it also occurs frequently in the somewhat extended meaning of covering something for the purpose of concealing it; so in Gen. xxxvii. 26: *And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood?* (cp. Job. xvi. 18). It is in this sense in which it is used in reference to the forgiving of sin; God covers over the sin so that He does not see it; in its origin the conception is a quaint one according to modern ideas. But in the Psalms, where it occurs in xxxii. 1, 5, lxxxv. 3 (cp. Job. xxxi. 33, Prov. x. 12), the thought is simply that of free forgiveness.

(c) *Kippêr*. This word, like that just considered, was adapted, as a technical term, from the language of the Levitical ritual. It is possible that, in meaning, there is a connection between the two, as this root also means "to cover"; but there are differences of opinion regarding the root-signification. According to some, the word comes from the Arabic, and the meaning is "to cover over" in the sense that a gift or an offering has the effect of covering over the eyes so that a cause of offence may not be seen; this meaning is illustrated, for example, in Gen. xx. 16: *Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, it is for thee a covering of the eyes to all that are with thee; and in respect of all thou art righted*. But still more pointed, on account of the use of the actual word under consideration, is Gen. xxxii. 20 (21 in Hebr.): *I will appease his face (lit., I will cover his face) with the present that goeth in front of me; and afterwards I will see his face, peradventure he will receive me*. If this derivation is correct, the meaning "to cover over" implies that an offering blinds the eyes of God to an offence which has been committed; the offering is the means whereby God is induced not to regard the offence.

On the other hand, others believe that the word denotes that that which is "covered over" is not the face of God, but the cause of offence, so that it is not seen by God; by this means the sin would be regarded as non-existent. According to the former meaning, the making of an atonement would be accomplished by a gift to the Deity; according to the latter, the sin would be, as it were, obliterated by means of covering it over through the offering of atonement; for this latter, Lev. xvii. 11 is instructive: *It is the blood that maketh atonement* (or "covers over") *by reason of the life* (it is said in the first part of this verse that *the life of the flesh is in the blood*). A third opinion is that the root-meaning of the word is "to wipe off," or "to wipe clean"; this is the meaning of the cognate Syriac stem, and there are other Semitic analogies which can be urged in favour of this meaning.¹ This word is used in lxv. 3 (4 in Hebr.), lxxviii. 38, lxxix. 9.

(d) *Salach*. The ordinary word for "to forgive," used always of God; it occurs in the Psalms in xxv. 11; xxxvi. 1, 5; ciii. 3; cxxx. 4 (in this last the noun is used).

¹ See Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 381 (second edition).

Besides these there are several other words which may be briefly referred to :

(e) *Machah* ; " to blot out " ; see above, p. 94. See li. 1, 9, (3, 11, in Hebr.), cix. 14.

(f) *Rapha* ; " to heal " ; see above, p. 92. See xli. 4 (5 in Hebr.) ; cp. ciii. 3, cvii. 20.

(g) *Kabas* ; " to wash " ; see above, p. 95. See li. 2, 7, (9 in Hebr.).

(h) *Tahar* ; " to cleanse " ; see above, p. 95. The cognate Arabic root is explained as meaning " to put afar," because he who was ritually clean " separated " himself from all that might make him unclean.¹ See li. 2, 7 (4, 9 in Hebr.).

(i) *Nagah*. The literal sense of this word is probably (though this is uncertain) " to be empty," or " to empty out," and thus " to be clean."² In xix. 12 (13 in Hebr.) it has the sense of regarding as innocent, and can thus be rendered " acquit," or " absolve " ; this is the only passage in the Psalms where the word is used in this sense.

(j) *Padah* ; " to ransom," or " to redeem." This word contains the underlying idea of payment ; and it is generally used of re-

¹ See, further, Baudissin, *Studien zur Semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, ii. p. 22.

² See the *Oxford Hebrew Lexicon*, s.v.

leasing from an enemy by means of a ransom (cp. Exod. xiii. 13, 14; Deut. vii. 8, xiii. 6). An instructive passage for the meaning of the word is Ps. lxix. 18 (19 in Hebr.), but here the word translated "redeem" in the Revised Version is *ga'al*, which is never used in reference to redemption from Sin; in the second clause of the verse the word rendered "ransom" is the one before us. In the Psalms the word is only once used in connection with redemption from Sin, cxxx. 8, and here it is probably used rather of redeeming from the power of iniquity, than of forgiveness for actual sins committed.

§ ii. It must strike one, at first, as somewhat strange that, in spite of the abundance of expressions used in reference to the obliteration of Sin, there should be, comparatively speaking, so few passages in the Psalms in which the forgiveness, or taking away, of sin is spoken of; yet so it is; in the whole of the Psalter there are not much more than twenty passages in which this subject is dealt with. This is the more remarkable in that the expression of the Sense of Sin, as we have seen, is here so pronounced. The explanation of this is of a three-fold character. In the first place, a large proportion of the

Psalms is concerned with subjects with which the thought of the forgiveness of sins is of necessity absent ; songs of praise and thanksgiving, meditations, and historical odes, of which there are many in the Psalter, do not, from their very nature, touch upon the subject. Secondly, it is frequently the case that when Sin is referred to, the sinners are thought of as either unworthy to be reckoned among the congregation of Israel, or else they are Gentiles ; both categories are regarded as outside the pale of divine forgiveness. Such an attitude may be thought incongruous in a truly religious psalmist, but one has to reckon with the spirit of the age. And thirdly, many psalms deal with the state of the afflicted and the oppressed ; here, again it would be unreasonable to expect the subject of forgiveness to be dealt with. Finally, it must also be remembered that the psalmists were *par excellence* the saints of the Lord, in whom the Sense of Innocence was strong for that very reason ; and, even when not explicitly expressed, that Sense of Innocence was mentally present.

§ iii. In proceeding now to examine the passages in which the forgiveness of sins is referred to, we shall see that the teaching on

the subject is quite plain and straightforward. Divine forgiveness is, to the godly, free and unconditional; this practically sums up the question, though one or two other elements force themselves into consideration, as we shall see. The recognition of divine forgiveness is expressed, for example, in lxxxvi. 5 :

*For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive,
And plenteous in mercy unto all them that
call upon thee.*

The mere fact of "calling upon" God is sufficient to obtain forgiveness. The same free forgiveness is seen in ciii. 3 :

*Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ;
Who healeth all thy diseases.*

More distinctly still is this brought out in lxv. 2, 3 (3, 4, in Hebr.) :

*O thou that hearest prayer,
Unto thee shall all flesh come.*

*Iniquities prevail against me,
(But) as for our transgressions, thou shalt
purge them away.*

An interesting passage is cxxx. 3, 4, where the idea is expressed that forgiveness of

iniquities consists simply in their not being "marked," or "observed," by God :

*If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities,
O Lord, who shall stand ?
But there is forgiveness with thee,
That thou mayest be feared (or "revered").*¹

Of course, this is brought about by the mercy of God, implicitly thought of. This real source of forgiveness is more explicitly expressed in other passages, ciii. 3, just quoted, and xli. 4 :

*I said, O Lord, have mercy upon me ;
Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.*

See also the beautiful passage ciii. 10-13 ; cp. xxv. 7, lxxviii. 38, 39, lxxix. 8. Sometimes forgiveness is asked for the sake of the divine name, for example, xxv. 11 :

*For thy name's sake, O Lord,
Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.*

Or, again, lxxix. 9 :

*Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory
of thy name ;
And deliver us, and purge away our sins,
for thy name's sake.*

¹ On cxxx. 7, 8, see above, § i. (j) of this section, p. 115.

§ iv. This leads us on naturally to the question whether there are any indications in the Psalms as to any mediatorial agency being the means of forgiveness. One must recognize two opposing attitudes here. It is a very striking thing that the efficacy of sacrifices, which were otherwise regarded as essentially the means of the obliteration of sin, should in a few notable cases be pointedly minimized; thus, in xl. 6-8 (7-9 in Hebr.), the observance of the precepts of the Law is regarded as far more important than offering sacrifices:

*Sacrifice and offering¹ thou hast no delight in,
Mine ears hast thou opened.²
Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not
asked for.*

*Then said I, Behold I am come,
In the roll of the book it is prescribed for me.
I delight to do thy will, O God,
Yea, thy Law is within my heart.*

Again, in ll. 13-15, 23, the "sacrifice of thanksgiving" and the paying of vows is seen to be far more important than the ordinary sacrifices:

¹ Lit. "peace-offering and meal-offering."

² Lit. "pierced."

*Will I eat the flesh of bulls,
 Or drink the blood of goats!
 Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
 And pay thy vows unto the Most High. . . .
 Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving
 glorifieth me. . . .*

And there are also the well-known words of li. 16, 17 (18, 19 in Heb.) :

*For thou delightest not in sacrifice¹ (else would
 I give it)²
 Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.
 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,
³ A contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not
 despise.*

And, lastly, lxix. 30, 31 (31, 32 in Hebr.) :

*I will praise the name of God with a song,
 And will magnify him with thanksgiving;
 And it shall please the Lord better than an ox,
 (Or) a bullock that hath horns and hoofs (cp.
 iv. 5, xxvii. 6, cvii. 22, cxvi. 17, cxix. 108.).*

These passages tell strongly against any idea of mediation in connection with forgiveness, and this accords with what we have already seen to be the general teaching on the sub-

¹ Lit. "peace-offering."

² These words are most probably a later addition.

³ The repetition of the word "broken" is almost certainly not part of the original Hebrew text.

ject in the Psalms. Nevertheless, there are some other passages which witness to another aspect of the question. The sacrificial system constituted *per se* a recognition of the principle of mediation, since sacrifices were the means whereby sins were obliterated; in so far, therefore, as the sacrificial system is recognized in the Psalms, these may be said to teach that forgiveness is not immediate.

The following are some examples of a belief in the efficacy of sacrifices :

*. . . Remember all thy meal-offerings,
And accept thy burnt sacrifices (xx. 3 [4 in
Hebr.]).*

The joyous participation of the psalmist in the public sacrifices is witnessed to in liv. 6 (8 in Heb.):

*With whole-heartedness¹ will I sacrifice unto
thee,
I will praise thy name, O Lord, for it is good.*

The psalmist calls upon others to do the same in xcvi. 8 :

*Ascribe unto the Lord the glory of his name,
Bring a meal-offering, and enter into his
courts.*

¹ Lit. "With voluntariness."

Again, in cxli. 2, it is said :

*My prayer is prepared as (the offering of) the incense before thee,
The lifting-up of my hands as the evening oblation* (see Exod. xxix. 38-42).

The passage cxviii. 27, which would be very appropriate here, according to the rendering of the Revised Version, is not really to the point, as there is no reference to sacrifice in the original ; the Hebrew text is corrupt. Originally the passage probably referred to the procession of the worshippers on the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles ; they carried palm-branches (*Lulab*) to which were bound willow-branches and twigs of myrtle ; seven circuits were made round the altar.

§ v. Besides these passages there are two or three others in which reference is made to mediatorial agency in connection with the forgiveness of sins. The first is xcix. 6-9 ; here Moses and Aaron, as priests, and Samuel, are celebrated in the psalm because they called on the name of the Lord. "It is evident," says Prof. Briggs, "that this calling on the name of Yahweh is conceived as that of priestly mediation" ; and in reference to the words in verse 8,

*Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God ;
Thou wast a God that forgavest them,*

he says, further, that "this doubtless refers to the intercession of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel in behalf of the people of Israel in times of sin and divine punishment." ¹

Once more, in cvi. 23, occur the words :

*Therefore he said that he would destroy them,
Had not Moses his chosen stood before him
in the breach,
To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy
(them);*

and in verse 30 of the same psalm :

*Then stood up Phinehas; and interposed,
And so the plague was stayed.*

As Prof. Briggs truly remarks, the rendering of the Authorised, as well as the Revised, Version ("executed judgement") "substitutes the result for the act expressed by the verb, and overlooks the mediatorial significance of his act." ²

These passages, therefore, must be taken into consideration when dealing with the subject of the forgiveness of sins ; in each case the sin is forgiven because of intercession, this witnessing, as far as these passages are

¹ *Op. cit.*, ii. pp. 309, 310.

² *Op. cit.*, ii. p. 352.

concerned, to the belief in a mediatorial agency in connection with forgiveness.¹

VIII. SUMMARY.

For the proper understanding of the Doctrine of Sin in the Psalms one must examine the various terms, and their root-meaning, which are employed ; this we have attempted to do as a preliminary. Turning then to the subject proper, we sought for indications in the Psalms as to any ideas regarding the origin of Sin ; and we saw that, generally speaking, the existence of Sin is taken for granted without any attempt to account for it. But certain passages point to a belief that Sin originates in man ; and in this connection attention was drawn to the later idea of the *Yetzer* or "Bias," which, in accordance with the exercise of man's free-will, is turned either to good or to bad. A few other passages, however, lend colour to the belief, which in later times was definitely taught in Rabbinical literature, that, as the Creator of all things in existence, God originated Sin. There is no sort of doubt that this theory of

¹ On the subject of Mediation generally, see the writer's *The Jewish Doctrine of Mediation*.

the origin of Sin was vehemently combated (and therefore held), and quotations have been given showing this. But in the Psalms this theory is never explicitly taught, though in some passages, as we have seen, it seems to be implied.

As to what constitutes the essence of Sin, according to the teaching of the Psalms this consists in the denial of God, wilful transgression of His commands, and contempt for His requirements. Closely connected with this is enmity towards the godly, which is regarded as implying enmity towards God Himself. Sin thus involves separation from God Who is Life; and therefore Sin brings death. At the same time, we have seen that the doctrine of Sin in the Psalms falls far short of that of the New Testament because, according to the former, justification can be attained by man through his own efforts; moreover, the universality of Sin, though occasionally recognized, is not realized in the sense in which this is taught in the Christian doctrine of Sin. Nevertheless, there are a few passages which, in a modified sense, teach the universality of Sin, and this constitutes one of the most striking elements of the sense of Sin as taught in the Psalms. Not

less important an element in the teaching concerning the sense of Sin is the frequent stress laid upon the confession of sins ; this is of great significance. The yearning for cleansing from Sin is also of great importance as witnessing to the deep sense of Sin which so frequently finds expression in the Psalms. We turned then to what appears, at first sight, to be a direct negation of anything like the sense of Sin, namely, the sense of Innocence, which is often strongly asserted in the Psalms ; but reasons were given showing that these assertions of innocence, as expressed by the psalmists, did not necessarily preclude a sense of Sin as experienced by the seekers after righteousness in those days ; the religious standard of the times, and the fact of the great difference between the godly and the wicked, differentiated as these so often were by being respectively worshippers of God and worshippers of idols—these were factors which had to be allowed due weight in considering the subject of the sense of Innocence.

The results of Sin were seen to be of a two-fold character ; temporal adversity, ending in being cut off prematurely from the land of the living ; and, in the more

developed belief, continuation of punishment in the world to come; "the wages of Sin is death" may, therefore, be said to have had a two-fold meaning, not only to the Apostle who wrote these words, but also to some of the later psalmists.

Lastly, we dealt with the teaching in the Psalms concerning the Forgiveness of Sin, and we pointed out that, in spite of the abundance of expressions used for the taking away of Sin, forgiveness finds but, comparatively speaking, a small place in the thoughts of the psalmists; a two-fold explanation of this was offered; firstly, that a large proportion of the psalms dealt with subjects with which the thought of the forgiveness of sins was naturally not concerned; and, secondly, that very often in those psalms in which Sin is mentioned, the sinners are thought of as unworthy of forgiveness, or else that they were, as Gentiles, outside the pale of God's mercy. In those passages, however, in which this subject is referred to, we saw that, in some, it is taught that the divine forgiveness is free and unconditional, while in others a mediatorial element is believed in.

LECTURE III.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE FUTURE LIFE.

“Thou guidest me by Thy counsel,
And afterward Thou wilt take me to glory.”
Ps. lxxiii. 24.

LECTURE III.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE FUTURE LIFE.

THERE are, at the least, some sixty passages in the Psalms from which some insight is to be gained regarding conceptions about the Hereafter. In general, the belief concerning this is the same in the Psalms as in the Old Testament as a whole, so that our investigation on the subject will include, to some extent, this larger range, though our main concern will be with the Psalms. But, as we shall see, the teaching in the Psalms reaches, ultimately, a development which is far in advance of the rest of the Old Testament.

I. SHĚÔL (THE ABODE OF THE DEPARTED).

As a preliminary it is essential that we should make clear to ourselves what is meant by the term *Shěôl*, i.e. the abode of the de-

parted, and the various ideas connected with it.

Regarding the derivation of the word, there are differences of opinion among scholars ; some hold that it comes from a root meaning " to ask," and that the word thus means " the place of inquiry." As an illustration of this, reference may be made to 1 Sam. xxviii. 6-18, where we have the description of how Saul went to inquire of the departed spirit of Samuel concerning the issue of the battle with the Philistines.¹ It is improbable, though this is held by some, that the idea of " the place of inquiry " referred to the place of judgement, in which the soul was subjected to a scrutiny regarding its moral life while on earth ; it is true that in the later Egyptian belief the soul of the dead man, after having gone through various vicissitudes, at last reached the judgement hall of Osiris, where he underwent an examination concerning his manner of life while on earth, and where finally his heart was weighed in the balance of the goddess of justice ; but this idea is obviously a developed one ; the early Israelite belief was of a much simpler character, and there is no differentiation, until much later times, between the good and the bad in the Hereafter.

Another theory as to the derivation of the word is that it comes from a root meaning " to be hollow,"

¹ This, according to Jastrow (*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, xiv. 165 ff ; *Journal of Biblical Literature and Exegesis*, 1900, pp. 82 ff), is also the meaning of the Assyrian equivalent to *Shēól*, the place where oracles are obtained.

in reference to *Shěôl* being a "hollow place," a "hole" (= "hell"; cp. the German *Hölle*).

The conceptions concerning *Shěôl* found in the Old Testament are diverse, and naturally so when one remembers that they represent the speculations of a variety of thinkers.

One can understand the objection to this statement that may be felt by some who will urge that if we believe in the inspiration of the Bible it is unfitting to apply the term "speculative" to the thoughts there expressed. But let it not be forgotten that the divine action is only one element in inspiration, immeasurably the more important element, but requiring human action to bring it to fruition; and that human action must often be in the nature of speculation, otherwise we should have to regard man as little more than an automatic receiver.

Shěôl is sometimes conceived of as a city with gates; the actual phrase "gates of *Shěôl*" does not, it is true, occur anywhere in the Psalms, but in Isa. xxxviii. 10, in the Psalm of Hezekiah, are the words:

I said: In the noontide of my days I shall go into the gates of Shěôl;

and its "bars" are spoken of in Job. xvii. 16, where Job says of his hope:

It shall go down to the bars of Shěôl.

On the other hand, the expression "gates of death" occurs in Ps. ix. 13 :

Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death ;

and in Ps. cvii. 18 :

They draw near unto the gates of death (cp. Job. xxxviii. 17).

"Death" and "*Shěôl*" are thus synonymous terms. The idea of *Shěôl* being a "city" would naturally have arisen, because it was in the cities that many people were gathered together ; and that *Shěôl* was conceived of as a place in which crowds were gathered together is clear from Job. xxx. 23 :

*For I know that thou wilt bring me to death,
To the house of assembly for all living* (cp. Job. xvii. 13) ;¹

and from Ps. xlix. 14 (15 in Hebr.) :

*As a flock they are put in Shěôl,
Death shall be their shepherd and their ruler* ^a (cp. Job. xxi. 16).

¹ Cp. the expressions "gathered unto his fathers," "he slept with his fathers," "he was gathered unto his people."

^a The Hebrew text of this clause is corrupt ; the above translation is based on an emendation.

Then, again, as in the case of Death, we have the expression "*snares of Shěôl*"; in the English Versions this word is rendered "cords" which is a literal rendering of the Hebrew; the idea is that *Shěôl* has the power of ensnaring men, and thus dragging them down; see, for example, Ps. xviii. 4, 5 (5, 6 in Hebr.):

*The cords of Death compassed me,
And the floods of ungodliness made me afraid;
The cords of Shěôl were round about me,
The snares¹ of Death came upon me (cp.
cxvi. 3).*

This leads to the further idea which imputed personality to *Shěôl*; in Isa. xxviii. 18, for instance, it is said:

*And your covenant with Death shall be dis-
annulled,
And your agreement with Shěôl shall not
stand.*

Death and *Shěôl* are again used synonymously. In Ps. lxxxix. 47, the "power of *Shěôl*" is

¹ This is a different word, meaning literally "a bait," e.g. for catching birds (Amos iii. 5); it is more frequently used, as here, in a figurative sense.

spoken of ; and in Isa. v. 14, it is described as an all-devouring monster :

*Therefore Shěôl hath enlarged her desire,
And opened her mouth without measure (cp.
Hab. ii. 5).*

This is paralleled by what is said in Ps. lxix. 15 :

Let not the Pit shut her mouth upon me.

Such personification is, however, purely figurative ; *Shěôl* is a place, not a person. Further, *Shěôl* is conceived of as being situated deep down under the earth ; it is in the " lower parts of the earth." An expression used in Ps. lxxxvi. 13, is "*Shěôl beneath*" ; the same is said of the " Pit," which is also used synonymously with *Shěôl* (but see below) in Ps. lxxxviii. 6. This thought of *Shěôl* being deep down under the earth is further graphically illustrated in Ps. xlix. 17 :

*For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away ;
His glory shall not descend after him (cp.
lxxiii. 9).*

It was, presumably, owing to the belief of

Shěôl being situated under the earth that such expressions arose as "the dust of death" (Ps. xxii. 15), and "lying down in the dust" (Job. xxi. 26); and we are reminded of the words in Ps. xxx. 9:

*Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare
thy truth?*

though here the thought is probably that contained in Gen. iii. 19: *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Further, *Shěôl* is a place of darkness; in Job x. 22, it is called "the land of darkness"; and the phrase "the shadow of death" is due to this conception (cp. Ps. xxiii. 4; xliv. 19; cvii. 10, 14); in Ps. cxliii. 3, the psalmist's enemy is spoken of as one who

*Hath made me dwell in dark places,
As those that have been long dead* (cp. lxxxviii. 6, 12; Job x. 21, 22).

Again, in *Shěôl* silence reigns supreme; thus in Ps. cxv. 17, it is said:

*The dead praise not thee, O Lord,
Neither they that go down into silence* (cp. xciv. 17).

Once more, *Shěôl* is the land of forgetting ;
in Ps. lxxxviii. 12, it is said :

*Shall thy wonders be known in the dark ?
And thy righteousness in the land of forgetful-
ness ?* (cp. Eccles. ix. 5, 6, 10).¹

The same belief, though differently expressed,
occurs in Ps. cxlvi. 4 :

*His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ;
In that very day his thoughts perish.*

And finally, it is the land whence there is
no return ; see Job x. 21 ;

*. . . Before I go whence I shall not return,
To the land of darkness and shadow of death.*

And again, in Job vii. 10 :

*As the cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away,
So he that goeth down to *Shěôl* shall come up
no more.*

It is certainly striking that these concep-
tions regarding *Shěôl* are identical with those

¹ Cp. the belief among the ancient Greeks, that they who drank of the waters of Lethe, the river of Hades, obtained forgetfulness.

of Babylonian belief concerning the underworld; for in the epic of "The Descent of Ishtar," for example, we read that in the place of the departed "dust is on door and bolt"; it is called "the dark house"; they who go there "sit in darkness"; it is "the land without return," and it is also spoken of as "the house from which he who enters never comes forth."

Another word used for the place of the departed is the "Pit" (*Bôr* in Hebrew); in this sense it occurs only in Ps. xxviii. 1, xxx. 3 (4 in Hebr.), lv. 23 (24 in Hebr.), lxix. 15 (16 in Hebr.), lxxxviii. 4, 6, (5, 7 in Hebr.), cxliii. 7. Ordinarily it means a "well" (pronounced, however, *Bě'êr*), or, more rarely a "pit" dug out (e.g. Ps. vii. 16, xl. 2). Synonymous with this is the Hebrew word *Shachath* (from a root meaning "to sink down")—it is translated variously in the Revised Version;¹ this word, like *Bôr*, is

¹ It is not easy to see on what principle the revisers worked in their renderings of this word, as the few following examples will show; it is translated "the pit," without marginal note, in Ps. xxx. 9, Job xxxiii. 22, 24, 28, 30, Isa. xxxviii. 17; "corruption," with "the pit" in the margin, in Ps. xvi. 10, xlix. 10, Job xvii. 4; "destruction," with "the pit" in the margin, in Ps. civ. 4; "destruction," without marginal note, in Ps. lv. 23.

also used, primarily, in the ordinary sense of a "pit," or "hole." As to the conception contained in the "Pit" in reference to the underworld, see the next section. Then, finally, mention must be made of the word *Abaddôn*; this occurs, for example, in Ps. lxxxviii. 11 (12 in Hebr; the only place in the Psalter), and a few times in Job (five times), and in Proverbs (twice); it is translated by "Destruction" in the Revised Version, but this is inexact, for, as a synonym of *Shěôl* and the "Pit," it does not connote an abstract idea; it would be better to render it "the place of Destruction," or else, as the Revised Version does elsewhere, (e.g. Job xxvi. 6), it should be transliterated *Abaddôn*. It occurs only in the Wisdom Literature, and is, therefore, a late expression; we must certainly see in it a development of belief concerning the condition of the departed hereafter; etymologically it means "destruction," and this, when spoken of in connection with the dead, clearly means something more than is implied by *Shěôl*, which, as a rule, is merely the place where the shades of the departed lead a silent, aimless existence in darkness and forgetfulness. But this leads us to consider more

carefully the ideas concerning the condition of the departed in *Shěôl*.

II. THE REPHAIM (THE DWELLERS IN SHEÛL).

In Ps. lxxxviii. 11, mention is made of the *Rephaim*, the equivalent term in the parallel clause being "the dead":

*Wilt thou do wonders among the dead?
Shall the Rephaim arise and praise thee?*

This is the only occurrence of the word in the Psalms, but inasmuch as it is the technical term used in the Old Testament for the inhabitants of *Shěôl*, and seeing that the *normal* teaching in the Psalms regarding all that has to do with the Hereafter coincides with the Old Testament generally on the subject, it will be well to see what ideas the Hebrews had concerning the departed. Let us, however, approach the subject from a wider standpoint; it will be seen that this is worth doing.

All races, even those in a state of undeveloped culture, recognize that man is made up of two parts, body and soul, or spirit; they believe that inside a man there is a small counterpart,

which, excepting that it is much smaller, is exactly similar to the man proper; this "little man" is the soul; and the similarity continues after death. They believe, further, that all man's activities are to be explained by the presence of the soul; if, therefore, the man falls asleep, and is inactive, the presumption is that the soul is absent. This belief was strengthened—if, indeed, it did not originate in this way—by dreams and trances; what happened in dreams was explained as the actual experiences of the soul, which had taken temporary leave of the body; when the soul had finished its wanderings, it returned to the body, and enabled the man to wake up. But, just as sleep was explained as a temporary absence of the soul from the body, so death was explained as being due to its permanent absence therefrom.¹ That there was, even after death, a continued relationship between the soul and the body was not doubted; but the nature of this relationship was left undefined.

A concrete example of this may be given; we quote from Frazer, *Op. cit.* i. 249: "The ancient Egyptians believed that every man has a soul (*ka*)

¹ Cp. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, i. 85 ff. (second edition); Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, i. 247 ff. (second edition).

which is his exact counterpart or double, with the same features, the same gait, even the same dress as the man himself. Many of the monuments dating from the eighteenth century onwards represent various kings appearing before divinities, while behind the king stands his soul or double, portrayed as a little man with the king's features. Some of the reliefs in the temple at Luxor illustrate the birth of King Amenophis III. While the queen-mother is being tended by two goddesses acting as midwives, two other goddesses are bringing away two figures of new-born children, only one of which is supposed to be a child of flesh and blood ; the inscriptions engraved above their heads show that, while the first is Amenophis, the second is his soul or double. And, as with kings or queens, so it is with common men or women. Whenever a child was born, there was born with him a double who followed him through the various stages of life ; young while he was young, it grew to maturity and declined along with him. . . . So thin and subtle was the stuff, so fine and delicate the texture of these doubles that they made no impression on ordinary eyes. . . . So exact is the resemblance of the mannikin to the man, in other words of the soul to the body, that, as there are fat bodies and thin bodies, so there are fat souls and thin souls ; as there are heavy bodies and light bodies, long bodies and short bodies, so there are heavy souls and light souls, long souls and short souls."

What has been said can, to some extent, be illustrated from the Old Testament. Four points have been referred to regarding the

beliefs generally held among uncivilized races,¹ and which are found among a people of such, relatively, high culture as the ancient Egyptians ; they are :

(a) That man is made up of a body and a soul, or spirit.

(b) That there is exact similarity between these, excepting that the soul is much smaller than the body ; and that this similarity continues after death.

(c) That the soul has the faculty of leaving the body temporarily, which occasions sleep, or permanently, which results in death.

(d) That an undefined relationship exists between the soul and the body even after death.

(a) As regards the first of these ; that this coincides with the teaching of the Old Testament is so obvious as not to require detailed proof. It will suffice to say that what we call the material² part of man is, in the Old

¹ Exhaustive instances illustrating these beliefs are given in Frazer's work referred to above.

² We must guard ourselves against thinking that our ideas of what is "material" and "spiritual" coincide with those of the Old Testament.

Testament, known as *basar* ("flesh"); what we call the "spirit" is in Hebrew the *ruach*, which, however, is not a spiritual thing in our sense of the word; it means "wind," and in its origin (though later on it assumed a more restricted meaning) had practically the same meaning as *něshamah*, "breath";¹ the breathing-in of this *ruach* became the *něshamah*, or "breath" of life; and when the *basar*, or "flesh," received this, it became a "living soul"; the Hebrew word for "soul" is *nephesh*. Cp. the following passages:

Gen. ii. 7: *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (něshamah) of life; and man became a living soul (nephesh).*

Gen. vii. 22: . . . *All in whose nostrils was the breath (něshamah) of the spirit (ruach) of life.*

Job. xxxiv. 14, 15.:

*If he set his heart upon man,*²

*If he gather unto himself his spirit (ruach)
and his breath (něshamah),*

¹ The study of the relevant passages gives some grounds for thinking that *ruach*, "spirit," is what God breathes into man, and thus becomes the *něshamah*, or "breath" of man.

² The Hebrew text of this clause is uncertain.

*All flesh (basar) shall perish together,
And man shall turn again unto dust* (cp. Prov. xx. 27).

The soul (*nephesh*) is identified with the blood in the body, as is clear from Lev. xvii. 11, 14 : *For the "soul" of the flesh is in the blood . . . for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the "soul"* ; verse 14 : *For the "soul" of all flesh is its blood*¹ (cp. Deut. xii. 23, 24, Jer. ii. 34). It is owing to this conception that blood is said to cry out ; see Gen. iv. 10 : . . . *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*

The inconsistencies, which a moment's thought will reveal, in these conceptions is to be accounted for by the existence, side by side, of different sets of ideas ; to separate them, and to set them forth here would take us too far from our present subject. Our main point at present is that the Hebrews differentiated, in the clearest possible manner, between the body of man, and his soul, or spirit ; but that, with regard to the two latter, there is no clear distinction of thought, for each is spoken of as what in modern speech would be described as the non-material part

¹ The same idea is found among the Arabs ; cp. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidenthums*, p. 217 (second ed.).

of man ; *nephesh* connotes at one time something "spiritual," at another something material,¹ and *ruach* is spoken of as something that occupies space in the body of man.

(b) In the Old Testament the idea of similarity between soul, or at all events the disembodied spirit, and body after death is expressed in striking ways ; but it is, at the same time, important to remember that the actual terms "soul" and "spirit" are never used in reference to the inhabitants of *Shěôl*. In 1 Sam. xxviii. 8 ff. we have the account of Saul's interview with the witch of Endor ; when Samuel appears, Saul knows who it is by the description given by the witch ; in verse 14 it says : *And he said unto her, What form is he of ? And she said, An old man cometh up ; and he is covered with a robe. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel.* This recognition is clearly due to the fact that the appearance of Samuel in the disembodied state is conceived to be the same as that in which Saul had known him when on earth. In Isa. xiv. 10, 16, is the account of the king of Babylon in

¹ This, indeed, is not to be wondered at, for even at the present day we use the expression "spiritual body," which is a contradiction in terms ; it is a *pis aller*—we cannot express it otherwise.

Shěôl, where he is recognized by those already there: *All they*¹ *shall answer and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? . . . They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, they shall consider thee, (saying), Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms . . .* Though it may, and rightly, be urged that this account is not intended to be taken in a literal sense, it must be remembered that it was prompted by conceptions which were held at the time; and, therefore, for our present purpose of illustration, it is *à propos*. In the same chapter it is explicitly stated that the very status occupied on earth is continued in *Shěôl*, for in verse 9 it is said: *Shěôl from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the Rephaim for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.* Again, in Ezek. xxxii. reference is made to the mighty on earth, who are still the mighty in *Shěôl*, (verse 21); the uncircumcised on earth are still the uncircumcised in *Shěôl* (verses 24, 27); they that had weapons of war and swords on earth still possess them in *Shěôl*

¹ I.e. the *Rephaim*, mentioned in the previous verse.

(verse 27); Pharaoh on earth is still Pharaoh in *Shěôl* (verses 31, 32). The whole chapter is very striking in the ideas expressed regarding the condition of the departed; it is an extraordinary commentary upon what is elsewhere expressed in the words:

Where the tree falleth, there shall it be (Eccles. xi. 3).

It is true enough that the conceptions embodied in the passages cited range over long periods of time; but what an interesting illustration they afford of the way in which antique thought develops into living truth—or, shall we say, of the germs of living truth being adumbrated in antique thought!

(c) It must be confessed that direct evidence in the Old Testament for the belief that the soul leaves the body temporarily during sleep or a trance is not forthcoming, though there are, in the accounts of dreams, things that suggest it; such as when Pharaoh, in his dream, stands upon the brink of a river (Gen. xli. 1, 17), and in other cases, in which the dreamer's experiences take place at a distance from the spot where his body is lying (Gen. xxxi. 10, xxxvii. 6 ff., xl. 11,

Judges vii. 13, Isa. xxix. 8, etc.). There is, however, one passage which certainly seems to be a reminiscence of this, at one time, world-wide belief; it is 1 Sam. xxv. 29; here Abigail says to David: *And though man be risen up to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul, yet the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle [properly "bag"] of life in the care of¹ the Lord thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling.* The idea of God having a bag in which He keeps souls is very quaint, and though the language here is most probably symbolic, meaning that the life of David is precious in the sight of God, yet the very quaintness of the thought leads one to conjecture that some primitive conception lies behind it. "Although Semitic examples of the belief of the external soul in its crude form appear to be exceedingly rare, the conception that a man's life can be wrapped up in some external object on the safety of which his immunity depends, is one that readily lends itself to development and refinement. Thus David's soul is bound up with (i.e. in the care and custody of) Yahwe (1 Sam. xxv.

¹ For this use of the Hebrew preposition, see Lev. v. 23, Deut. xv. 3, Isa. xlix. 4 (Driver, *Book of Samuel*, p. 156).

29); and, according to 2 Sam. xxi. 17, the life of the nation is wrapped up in David, since the extinction of the 'lamp of Israel' seems to entail that of the people."¹ The passage Gen. xxxv. 18, should also be considered in this connection.

(d) The last point in this digression is the belief that a certain relationship exists between the soul and the body after death. The first thing that suggests itself is, of course, the care of the dead; this opens out a large subject which we do not intend to touch upon here; it must suffice to say that the burial customs among the Hebrews did not, any more than among all other peoples, have reference to the mourners alone. A consideration of another kind is contained in the passage already alluded to in another connection, which speaks of Abel's blood crying out from the ground (Gen. iv. 10); see what was said above about the soul being identified with blood.

This digression has carried us some way from the immediate subject in hand; but it is not irrelevant, for it has touched upon

¹ Stanley A. Cook, in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, xiv. pp. 413 ff.; and for many further instances of the belief in the "external soul" see Frazer, *Op. cit.* i. pp. 350 ff.

some elements which are essential in considering the Old Testament belief regarding the state of the departed.

We turn now to what we are definitely told about the *Rephaim*. The name is identical with that of an early race of giants who are said to have once been the inhabitants of Palestine (cp. Deut. ii. 10, 11, 20), though presumably they were still in existence within historical times (see Gen. xiv. 5); there was also a valley of this name (Josh. xv. 8, xviii. 16, 2 Sam. v. 22). We cannot here concern ourselves with the question as to whether any connection existed in the minds of the ancient Israelites between this early race of giants and the inhabitants of *Shěôl*.¹ The meaning of the name, as applied to the departed, is "the weak ones" (from a root *raphah*); in Isa. xiv. 10, the inhabitants of *Shěôl* are represented as saying to the king of Babylon :

¹ This is maintained by Schwally, *Das Leben nach dem Tode*, pp. 64 ff.; cp. the same writer in the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1898, pp. 312 ff. Driver quotes Rob. Smith in suggesting that "the old giants were still thought to haunt the ruins and deserts of East Canaan" (Commentary on *Deuteronomy*, p. 40) ("International Critical Commentary"). It is also worth noting that the shade of Samuel is called a god; see 1 Sam. xxviii. 13.

*Art thou also become weak as we ?
Art thou become like unto us ?*

So that it is probably best to translate *Rephaim* as the "Shades," though, as we shall see, the Old Testament conception sees in them something much more material than what we should understand by this word.¹ That the *Rephaim* were believed to have emotions is clear from the following passages ; in 1 Sam. xxviii. 15, when Samuel has been "brought up" from *Shěôl* by the witch of Endor, Samuel's first words to Saul are : *Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up ?* In Job. xxvi. 5, it is said that the *Rephaim* tremble ; in Ezek. xxxii. 31, Pharaoh is comforted in *Shěôl* by the sight of his enemies who are also there. Further, the status of the *Rephaim* in *Shěôl* continues to be what it was on earth—see Is. xiv. 9, Ezek. xxxii. (the whole chapter) ; and, as we have already seen, the *Rephaim* recognize one another in *Shěôl*.

We have now gained, it may be hoped, some definite ideas upon the general teaching of the Old Testament concerning the Departed. We turn again to the Psalms, and we come

¹ Cp. Ezek. xxxii. 27, according to which the *Rephaim* have bones !

to the question : Is there, according to the teaching of the Psalms, any differentiation in *Shěôl* between the Shades of the wicked and those of the righteous ? The answer is that, speaking generally, and with some exceptions to be noted later on, there is no differentiation between them ; in this all men are alike, that they all go down to *Shěôl*, and that they are all in the same condition there ; for example, xlix. 10 (11 in Heb.) :

*For he seeth that wise men die,
The fool and the brutish together.¹*

And whenever the righteous and the wicked are spoken of as going down to *Shěôl*, there is no hint that when they are there, there will be any difference in their condition. It is true that there are certain passages which seem at first sight to imply that *Shěôl* is more especially a place for the wicked ; for example, ix. 17 (18 in Hebr.) :

*The wicked shall turn back into Shěôl,
(Even) all the nations that forget God.*

Or xxxi. 17 (18 in Hebr.) :

*Let me not be ashamed, O Lord, for I have
called upon thee,*

¹ The text of the original is not above suspicion.

(But) let the wicked be ashamed, let them be silent in Shěôl.

But it is probable that what is really meant in passages like these is what is expressed in lv. 15 (16 in Hebr.):

*Let death come suddenly upon them,
Let them go down alive into Shěôl ;*

the thought is the unexpected cutting-off of the wicked, a sudden going-down to *Shěôl*, as with Korah and his company (Num. xvi. 31-33). So that what the passages referred to teach is, not that *Shěôl* is a place more especially for the wicked, but that the wicked go down to it *sooner* than the righteous, and thus enjoy life and its pleasures for a shorter time than the righteous. This was a theory which the facts of life proved to be untenable, and this other psalmists realized, as we shall see later on. In the meantime, it is worth pointing out here that in many of those passages in which the word "Pit" is used instead of *Shěôl*, it is quite likely that the former is not intended to be entirely synonymous with the latter, but that the "Pit" refers to "the extreme depths of the cavernous underworld"; if this is so, it implies that

the "Pit" is, in some sense, a worse place than the other parts of *Shěôl*, which, again, would imply a belief in a difference in the condition of those who are in *Shěôl*. This would be a development.¹

III. GOD AND SHĚÔL.

We come next to a consideration of great importance; one which, it may well be believed, gives the key to the reason why (with a few exceptions to be dealt with presently) in the Psalms generally the conceptions concerning the Hereafter are so inadequate and unsatisfactory. It is this: that God plays no part in the world to come. A truth, which in itself may be obvious enough, requires repeated emphasis in the present connection, namely, that conceptions concerning the Hereafter run parallel to, and are conditioned by, conceptions concerning God. Although in its more developed form, as we have already seen, the doctrine of God in the Psalms is sublime, it must be remem-

¹ Cp. Ezek. xxxi. 18, where it is implied that "the uncircumcized" and those who are "slain by the sword" occupy a worse place in the "nether parts of the earth" than others; see also xxxii. 19, 23.

bered that the point of view of the psalmists is, mostly, restricted to their own land, and to temporal affairs. It is possible to have exalted ideas about God, and yet that those ideas should be very circumscribed ; that is, with a few exceptions, characteristic of the Psalms. A true and worthy conception of God can really only be attained when His power, and interest, and activity, are seen not only to extend beyond the limits of a particular country or people, but (which is far more important) that His power, and interest, and activity are not restricted by time or space ; in other words, that divine action is at least as great in the world of spirit as in the visible world of every day.

Now, as just remarked, in the Psalms the conceptions concerning God, even when most exalted, are, as a rule, circumscribed in their scope ; and in harmony with this is the frequently implied belief, which is also here and there more than implied, that God plays no part in the life and land of the Hereafter. Let us illustrate this :

Ps. vi. 5 (6 in Hebr.) :

*For in death there is no remembrance of thee,
In Shěôl who shall give thee thanks ?*

Ps. xxx. 9 (10 in Hebr.):

*What profit is there in my blood when I go
down to the Pit?*

*Shall the dust praise thee, shall it declare
thy faithfulness?*

And, once more, xxviii. 1:

Unto thee, O Lord, do I call;

My Rock, be not deaf unto me;

Lest, if thou be silent unto me,

*I be compared with them that go down into
the Pit (cp. cxliii. 7).*

It may be objected that in passages like these the reference is only to man, who has not the power to worship when in *Shěôl*, and that they do not, therefore, necessarily imply any restriction as far as God is concerned; but this would mean that God had the power of making His presence felt by the spirits of the dead, but did not use that power; such a thought cannot be entertained when one thinks of the righteous dead. But, apart from that, what is to be said of such a passage as this, lxxxviii. 4, 5, (5, 6 in Hebr.):

*I am counted with them that go down into the
Pit;*

I am become as a man without help;¹

¹ It is possible that we should read "without God."

*Cast off among the dead,
Like the slain that lie in the grave,
Whom thou rememberest no more,
For they are cut off from thy hand.*

The whole psalm should be read in this connection. Here there can be no shadow of doubt that God is believed to play no part among men in the land of the Hereafter. This is an important element in the doctrine of the Future Life as *normally* taught in the Psalms.

Not unconnected with this is the further question as to the way in which men contemplated death. Sometimes, as in xiii. 3, (4 in Hebr.), death is spoken of as a sleep, and which in itself, therefore, is not regarded with fear; at other times it is thought of as something terrible, because it means that an enemy has prevailed; this is graphically brought out, for example, in lv., where the *voice of the enemy* and the *oppression of the wicked* are spoken of, and in consequence of which it is said in verses 4, 5, (5, 6, in Hebr.):

*My heart trembleth within me,
And the terrors [of death]¹ are fallen upon me,
Fear and trembling are come upon me,
And horror hath overwhelmed me.*

¹ It is uncertain, however, whether this belonged to the original text.

But, speaking generally, it is probably correct to say that the righteous regarded death with horror, mainly because it cut them off from worship, and thus from communion with God ; while the wicked regarded death with horror, because it put an end to the enjoyments of life. The latter point is obvious ; the former is illustrated by such passages as these :

CXX. 17, 18 :

*The dead praise not the Lord,
Nor they that go down to silence ;
But we will bless the Lord,
From this time forth, and for evermore.*

cxlvi. 2 :

*I will praise the Lord while I live,
I will sing unto the Lord while I have my being
(cp. civ. 33).*

And one is reminded of the striking words in another psalm, not incorporated in the Psalter, in which this truth is vividly illustrated, Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19 :

*For Shěôl doth not give thee thanks, Death
doth not praise thee ;
They that go down to the Pit hope not for thy
faithfulness ;
He that liveth, he that liveth, he (it is) that
praiseth thee, as I do this day.*

The words are from Hezekiah's psalm of praise and thanksgiving for his recovery from sickness.

IV. THE POSTERITY OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

There is a thought that frequently finds expression both in the Psalms and in the Old Testament generally, which demands some consideration, for it may well have been *one* of the factors which, under divine guidance, led men to a more exalted conception of the Hereafter than that which had obtained in the past. And what is particularly interesting here is that the thought about to be considered is itself the development of an extremely antique conception. The matter can, perhaps, best be put in this way: Why was it, originally, that men placed great importance upon having a "seed after them"? To attempt to answer this question, so far as the origin of the idea is concerned, would be out of place here,¹ nor is it necessary for present purposes; it suffices to say that the original reason which prompted the desire to have a "seed," from the religious standpoint, was in accordance

¹ It would involve entering into the subjects of Ancestor-worship and sacrifices to the dead.

with primitive conceptions. Whatever that original reason was, does not matter now ; the point is, that in later times the same desire "to possess a seed" continued to exist, but the *reason* for that desire became different. In later times the reason was that which often finds expression in the Psalms, as well as elsewhere in the Old Testament, namely, that the righteous are to be rewarded after their death because their memory will live on after them in their seed. A few examples may be given. As a reward for the man who fears the Lord, it is said in Ps. xxv. 13 :

His soul shall dwell at ease [referring to this life],
And his seed shall inherit the land.

Ps. lxix. 36 :

The seed also of his [i.e. God's] *servants shall inherit it* [i.e. Zion],
And they that love his name shall dwell therein.

Ps. cii. 28 :

The children of thy servants shall continue,
And their seed shall be established for ever.

There are a number of other passages to the same effect ; the great object of the

continuance of this posterity of the righteous is that thereby their memory can be preserved; see the whole of cxii. 1-6, especially verse 6 :

The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

A further striking illustration is that given in cxxxii. 1-12, where David and his posterity are spoken of ; the whole passage should be read.

On the other hand, the punishment of the wicked is expressed in the opposite sense ; see, for example, xxxvii. 28 :

*For the Lord loveth judgement,
And forsaketh not his saints,
They are preserved for ever ;
But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*

In cix. 13-15 this thought is very vividly portrayed ; in reference to the wicked it is said :

*Let his posterity be cut off,
In one generation let his name be blotted out.¹
Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered,²
And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out,*

¹ This clause is translated according to the Septuagint Version.

² The Hebrew text adds here "with the Lord," but it is, probably rightly, omitted in the Syriac Version.

*Let them be before the Lord continually,
And let his memory be cut off from the earth.¹*

It is worth while to quote in this connection some verses from *Ecclesiasticus*, where the thoughts which we are considering find still more pointed expression; this is especially profitable, for the bulk of the book *Ecclesiasticus* is contemporary with some of the later portions of the Psalter. There are various appropriate passages from this book which might be quoted, but the most important is xli. 6-13; the following free translation is from the recently found Hebrew text, which differs very markedly from the Greek Versions of which our English Authorized and Revised Versions are translations:

6. *From the son of the ungodly power shall be
taken away,
And want shall continually abide with his
seed.*

7. *An ungodly father do the children curse,
For because of him do they suffer reproach.*

II. *Nothingness is the body of man,
But the name of the pious shall not be cut off.*

¹ This clause is translated according to the Septuagint Version, with which two Hebrew manuscripts agree as far as the verb is concerned,

12. *Have a care for thy name, for that abideth longer for thee Than thousands of sparkling treasures.*
 13. *Life's goods last for limited days, But the reward of a name for days beyond count* (see also the important passage, Isa. lvi. 3-5).

Note especially verses 11-13.

Now from passages like those just quoted from the Psalms, on which this *Ecclesiasticus* passage is an interesting commentary, it will be acknowledged that there must have existed the underlying idea (if, indeed, it was not something more) of a man living on, as it were, in his seed after he was dead. Granted that it was only the memory which was meant, still the name of the righteous departed continued to be a living thing, while at the same time the belief was present in the continuance of the existence, in however nebulous a form, of those whose memories were held in veneration. If one takes these two parallel thoughts, and contemplates them, is it not in the nature of things that, taken together, they should have formed one step upwards, at all events, in the development of the conceptions concerning the Hereafter? Whether it is in the nature of

things or not, however, the fact is that during the second century B.C., and indeed during the early part of it, we find an extraordinary development taking place in the conceptions concerning the Future Life, and there are indications in some of the post-Biblical Jewish works of this period that the thought of which we have been speaking was not altogether unconnected with this development. At any rate, passages of which the few following are examples are worth thinking of in connection with what has been said :

In the *Book of Enoch*, xxii. 5-7, it is told of how Enoch saw the spirits of the children of men who were dead, and their voice penetrated to heaven and complained. Enoch then asks the angel Rufael : *Whose spirit is that one yonder whose voice thus penetrates (to heaven) and complains?* And the angel answers : *This is the spirit which went forth from Abel, whom his brother Cain slew, and he keeps complaining of him till his seed is destroyed from the face of the earth, and his seed disappears from amongst the seed of men.* The memorial of the righteous which, in the Psalms, is spoken of as being preserved by their seed, was a thought which developed into that of

their memorial being preserved by God ; cp. the *Book of Enoch*, ciii. 4: *And your spirits—(the spirits) of you who die in righteousness, will live and rejoice and be glad ; and their spirits will not perish, but their memorial will be before the face of the Great One unto all generations of the world* (cp. civ. 13, *Test. of the xii Patriarchs*, Naph. viii. 5). See also, on the other hand, with regard to the wicked, the *Book of Enoch*, xcvi. 4–8: *Woe unto you, ye sinners, for your riches make you appear like the righteous, but your hearts convict you of being sinners, and this word will be a testimony against you, for a memorial of your wickedness. . . .* (cp. also xcvi. 13, xci. 11, for the cutting off of the root of the sinners). These passages are not without some bearing on the subject before us.

It is not, may one add, maintained that *in itself* the thought of the memory of the righteous departed being preserved by their seed is to be regarded as a development in the conceptions about the Future Life ; not that ; —what is contended is that the thought was one which could not long remain stationary in view of the fact that a personal identity of some sort was believed in regarding the souls of the departed. That memory in-

volved, sooner or later, the question as to differentiation between the righteous and the sinners in the next world ; when once that point was reached, further development of thought was inevitable ; this is proved by the few quotations from extra-canonical books just given, and, as we shall see, by some passages in the Psalms themselves.

This, therefore, as one of the elements—indirect in its bearing, it may be—in the doctrine of the Future Life in the Psalms, claimed a passing attention.

V. THE FINAL DEVELOPMENT.

So far we have dealt with what may fairly be regarded as the normal doctrine of the Future Life as taught in the Psalms. But there are a certain number of passages which not only adumbrate, but actually present a highly developed conception regarding this subject. In these we shall see the thoughts of the psalmists expanding and soaring upwards in a wonderful manner, and realizing that the Future Life is something glorious and happy. And what is so striking and significant about this is that it is the deeper knowledge of God and a fuller apprehension

of His divine goodness and power which brought these thinkers to see that life beyond the grave is better than this life.

Let us first take a passage which assumes the direct contrary to what has just been said, Ps. lxxxviii. 10-12 (11-13 in Hebr.):

Wilt thou do wonders among the dead ?

Shall the Rephaim arise and praise thee ?

Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave ?

Thy faithfulness in Abaddon ?

Shall thy wonders be known in the dark ?

And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness ?

In the mind of the psalmist the answer to all these questions is : " No ! " But one can see at once that only one thing was wanted to change each answer into : " Yes ! " And that one thing was—the fuller realization of God. Now let us turn to another passage, not a great deal later, but certainly later, than that just quoted, cxxxix. 7-12 :

Whither can I go from thy spirit ?

And whither can I flee from thy presence ?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there,

And if I make my bed in Shěôl, behold thou art there !

*If I lift up my wings¹ towards the dawn,
If I dwell in the furthest sea,*

*Even there thy hand will take hold of me,²
And thy right hand will grasp me.*

*And I said: "Surely darkness will fence
me about,"³*

And night will be the light around me,"⁴

*Even the darkness hideth⁵ not from thee,
And the night shineth as the day;
Darkness is as light (to thee).⁶*

These two passages bring out in a wonderfully clear manner the two notes of despair and hope, regarding the Future Life, which belong respectively to the inadequate, and the fuller, realization of the Personality of God.

We have already seen, in dealing with the doctrine of God in the Psalms, that even when a development of conception has taken place, the influence of earlier thought is not shaken off at once, so that more spiritual ideas are

¹ So the Septuagint and Syriac against the Hebrew; this only involves a change in the Hebrew points, not in the text.

² This rendering (instead of "lead") is based on the emendation of a single letter in the Hebrew text; it suits the sense and the context better.

³ Cp. Job i. 10.

⁴ The Hebrew text of this clause is uncertain.

⁵ Lit. "doth not cause to be dark."

⁶ This clause is probably a later addition, for, as a thirteenth line, it is not required, and spoils the symmetry.

found interlaced with material ones; this is what we ventured to call an intermediate stage in the development of the doctrine. A similar process, as we should naturally expect, is to be observed in the doctrine of the Future Life; though it must be said that, in this latter case, the development of thought seems to have travelled quicker. An example of this is furnished in the psalm which we have just been considering (cxxxix.). After the psalmist has shown, through his fuller realization of God, that in the Future Life the divine presence will not be wanting, he goes on to speak of what he conceives to be the nature of the "resurrection" body; it is here that, while giving expression to a most extraordinary idea, he shows that his conceptions are still tinged with materialism. The passage to be considered is cxxxix. 13-18; all commentators are agreed that this is one of the most difficult passages in the whole of the Psalter; the text is not above suspicion, and the thought is intricate and obscure. It must, therefore, be frankly confessed that the interpretation of it to be offered here does not claim to be anything more than tentative; on the other hand, it has not been lightly adopted; and if it

has its difficulties it does not differ in this from every other interpretation which has been given.

First of all, there is one very important point about the whole of passage, verses 7-18, concerning which there is absolutely no doubt, and that is that the psalmist is speaking about the Future Life. In the next place, there is also no sort of doubt as to what is referred to in verses 13, 14 :

*For thou didst form my inward parts,
Thou didst cover me in my mother's womb.
I thank thee for thy marvellous [lit. "awe-inspiring"] works ;
Thou art wonderful, (and) thy works are
wonderful :
And my soul knoweth (it) right well.*

Here there is a clear and unambiguous reference to the formation of the material body preparatory to its appearance on earth ; this is declared to be the creative act of God ; the passage closes with an acknowledgement of the wondrousness of this act. But now, in the next four verses there is a further reference to the formation of the body ; only this time the body is not spoken of as being formed in the womb, but in the

“lowest parts of the earth,” i.e. in *Shěôl*, and the component parts of the unformed substance are written down in God’s book; the passage closes with the psalmist’s affirmation that, when he awakes from the sleep of death, he will find himself in the presence of God. Before discussing this passage further, let us quote it in full :

*My frame was not hidden from thee,
 When I was made in secret,
 And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of
 the earth ;
 Thine eyes did see mine unformed substance,
 And in thy book hath it all been written.
 Days were ordained,
 When as yet there was none of them.
 How precious to me are thy thoughts,¹ O God,
 How great is the sum of them !
 Should I count them, they would be more in
 number than the (grains of) sand,
 When I shall have awakened, I shall still be
 with thee.*

While it is willingly granted in this passage (verses 7-18) there may be glosses inserted by later thinkers, it is suggested that in its present form, embodying as it does more

¹ Cp. the same word in verse 2 of this psalm ; the Hebrew word does not occur elsewhere in the Old Testament in this sense.

developed ideas concerning the Future Life, it is intended to teach that, just as God prepares the body in the womb for life on this earth, so does He also prepare another body in an intermediate state for the Future Life that is to be. The psalmist, it is true, conceives of this "risen" body as material, but that does affect the main thought. As already said, this interpretation is offered tentatively ; but there are ideas found in other books, both of approximately the same period as this psalm in its latest form, and of somewhat later times, which make it not wholly improbable that this interpretation may have something in it. It is, of course, not claimed that the following passages do more than throw some indirect side-lights on our passage, but they are worth thinking over in the present connection :

In the *Book of Enoch*, cviii. 10-15, after it has been described how the blessings which the righteous have received are recounted in "the books," and that God has assigned them their recompense, it continues, in verses 11 ff. : *And now I will summon the spirits of the good who belong to the generation of light, and I will transform those who were born in darkness, who sought not honour in the flesh as their*

faithfulness deserved. And I will bring forth, clad in shining light, those who have loved my holy name, and I will set each on the throne of his honour. And they will be resplendent for times without number; for righteousness is the judgement of God; for to the faithful He will give faithfulness in the habitation of upright paths. And they will see how those who were born in darkness will be cast into darkness, while the righteous will be resplendent. And the sinners will cry aloud, and see them as they shine, and they indeed will go where days and seasons are prescribed for them (cp. ciii. 2 ff.).

In connection with the words, "I will transform those who were born in darkness . . . and I will bring forth, clad in shining light, those who have loved my holy name," the following should be thought of, *Book of Enoch*, lxii. 15, 16: *And the righteous and the elect will have risen from the earth, and ceased to be of downcast countenance, and will have been clothed with garments of glory, and these shall be your garments, garments of life before the Lord of Spirits; and your garments will not grow old, and your glory will not pass away before the Lord of Spirits.* In a work belonging to the first century A.D. (but embodying earlier ideas), this thought is

further developed, namely in the *Ascension of Isaiah*, iv. 16: *But the saints will come with the Lord with their garments which are (now) stored up on high in the seventh heaven; with the Lord they will come, whose spirits are clothed, they will descend and be present in the world, and He will strengthen those who have been found in the body, together with the saints, in the garments of the saints.* In the same work, viii. 14, 15, it is said: *When from the body by the will of God thou hast ascended hither, then wilt thou receive the garment . . . and thou wilt become equal to the angels of the seventh heaven.* Again, in ix. 7 ff. we read: *And there I saw all the righteous stript of the garments of the flesh, and I saw them in their garments of the upper world.* In yet another work, belonging also to the first century A.D., namely 2 (4) Esdras ii. 44, 45, occurs the following: *So I asked the angel, and said: "What are these, my lord?" He answered and said unto me: "These be they that have put off the mortal clothing, and put on the immortal."* Finally, we must turn to a few passages in the New Testament; 2. Cor. v. 1-4: *For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle [i.e. "bodily frame," see R.V. marg.] be dissolved we have a building from God, a house not made*

with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For verily, in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven ; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this tabernacle [see above] do groan, being burdened ; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. Rev. iii. 5 : He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments ; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life (see also iv. 4, vi. 11, vii. 9-17).

Now, when one reads these passages—and a great many more of like import could be given—it is not difficult to see that they represent three stages of thought. First, the idea of a material body which will belong to man at the Resurrection ; then that this body will be clothed in shining garments ; and, lastly, that the "shining garments," or "white garment," or "garment of life," is a synonym for the Resurrection body. So that when these various developments of thought are taken into consideration, the possibility must be granted that in Ps. cxxxix. 13-18, the psalmist had in mind the idea, materialistic it is true, of a body which God

formed in *Shěôl* in preparation for the Resurrection life, just as He prepared in the womb a body for the life on this earth. One has to bear in mind here the old-world idea of a "framework of bone,"¹ which has to be "clothed upon." But materialistic as the psalmist's conception is, it witnesses, nevertheless, to a great development of thought; one has only got to think of how the existence in *Shěôl* was conceived of in earlier times to realize what a stupendous advance is contained in the belief in a *living body* in the world to come, and in the conviction that in that day man will have uninterrupted communion with God. Nor must it be overlooked that there is implied in this belief a new conception of *Shěôl*, which is no more the final abode of the *Rephaim*, or "Shades," but the place where God prepares men for the glorious consummation which is to come. The psalmist, in the passage we have been considering, was thinking only of one who was righteous; concerning the wicked there was another fate, as we shall see.

The effect of this fuller conception of the Future Life upon the pious in Israel must

¹ Contrast with this St. Luke xxiv. 39.

have been very great ; for not only did it fill him with hope as regards the future, but also, as concerning the present time, it solved that tremendous mystery of how the facts of the prosperity of the wicked and the adversity of the righteous in this world could be reconciled with the belief in the existence of a God Who was just and righteous. Perplexity is often expressed in the Psalms as to why it is that the wicked do not come into misfortune, while the righteous suffer, and attempts are made to account for the incongruity ; but there is no real explanation until it is realized that this world is not the end of all things ; when once this truth is apprehended, however, then the psalmist can sing, as in lxxi. 20 :

*Thou hast caused me to see many troubles, ¹
(But) thou wilt quicken me again,
And wilt bring me up again from the lowest
parts of the earth.*

In this last clause the idea of rising from the dead (" the lowest parts of the earth "—*Shěôl*) is clearly present, even if, as some commentators hold, the expression is here

¹ The addition in the Hebrew text of " and evils " should probably be omitted.

used figuratively. But the classical passage for illustrating what has been said is Ps. lxxiii., in which is contained almost the highest, if indeed it be not itself the highest, point in the Psalms concerning the doctrine of the Future Life. This psalm is, moreover, of particular interest in this connection, because it first states the difficulty just referred to in detailed form and in very graphic language, and then proceeds to solve it. It is a long psalm, and cannot, therefore, be quoted in full, but we will give the salient passages. In conscious innocence, the psalmist says, in verse 2 :

*And, as for me, my feet were almost gone,
My steps had well nigh slipped ;*

and then he goes on to contrast this with the lot of the wicked, verses 3-5 :

*For I was envious at the arrogant,
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked ;
For they have no worries,¹
But perfect and settled² is their strength ;
They are not in trouble as (other) men,
Neither are they plagued like (other) men.*

¹ The R.V. rendering of this clause : " For there are no bonds (marg. ' pangs ') in their death," assumes the correctness of the Hebrew text as it stands, which is quite obviously corrupt.

² Lit. " fat."

The wicked and their ways are described up to the end of verse 11, and then the psalmist goes on in verse 12 :

*Behold, these are the wicked,
And, being always at ease, they increase in
riches.*

And now there follows a hypothetical statement ; for the purpose of his argument the Psalmist assumes the position which would have been taken up in earlier days, and says, in verses 13, 14 :

*Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart,
And washed my hands in innocency !
For all day long have I been plagued,
And chastened every morning.*

But then come the striking words which show that this has only been said hypothetically, for he continues in verse 15 :

*If I had said, I will speak thus,
Behold I should have dealt treacherously (i.e.
dishonestly)
With the generation of thy children.*

And he then goes on to describe the utter destruction of the wicked at their latter end, that is, beyond the grave ; while, in

contrast to this, he says in regard to himself, as representing the godly, these words, in verses 23-25 :

*Nevertheless, I am continually with thee,
 Thou holdest me by my right hand ;
 Thou guidest me by thy counsel,
 And afterward thou wilt take me to glory.
 Whom have I in heaven (but thee) ?
 And having thee [lit. " being with thee "], I
 desire nought else on earth.*

Here, then, we reach a beautiful height in the conception of the Future Life ; and this passage is the more striking in that the thought-development manifests itself in three directions. First, regarding the doctrine of God ; for it will have been noticed at once that God is apprehended in a far fuller way than is the case in most of the psalms ; it is realized that His power and activity are not restricted to this earth, and that in His mercy He suffers man to partake of the glory which is to be revealed hereafter. Then, as to the belief concerning the Future Life, the passage witnesses to the conviction that it is glorious, and that in the Hereafter God is man's portion for ever. And, finally, the psalmist sees the

solution of the perplexities, and what seemed to be the inconsistencies, of life, in the reward laid up for the righteous in the world to come.

In connection with this latter point, it will be instructive to read the following quotation from the *Book of Enoch* (cii. 4–ciii. 4) :

Fear ye not, ye souls of the righteous, and be hopeful, ye that die in righteousness. And grieve not if your soul descends in grief into Shěôl, and that in your life your body has not fared as your goodness deserved, but, truly, as on a day on which you became like the sinners, and on a day of cursing and chastisement. And when ye die, the sinners speak over you (on this wise) : “ As we die, so die the righteous, and what benefit do they reap from their deeds ? Behold, even as we, so do they die in grief and darkness ; and what advantage have they over us ? From henceforth we are equal. And what will they receive, and what will they see for ever ? For, behold, they too have died, and from henceforth for ever they will see no light.” I tell you, ye sinners, ye are content to eat and drink, and strip men naked, and rob, and sin, and acquire wealth, and see good days. Have ye seen the righteous, how their end falls out ? For no manner of violence is found in them till the day of their death. “ Nevertheless (say the sinners) they perished, and became as though they had not been, and their souls descended into Shěôl in tribulation.” Now, therefore, I swear to you, the righteous, by the glory of Him that is great, and honoured, and mighty in dominion, and by His greatness I swear to you ; I know this mystery, and have read it in the heavenly tables, and have seen the book of the holy ones, and have found written

therein, and inscribed, regarding them : that all goodness, and joy, and glory, are prepared for them, and are written down for the spirits of those who have died in righteousness ; and that manifold good will be given to you in recompense for your labours, and that your lot is abundantly beyond the lot of the living. And your spirits—(the spirits) of you who die in righteousness, will live and rejoice and be glad, and their spirits will not perish, but their memorial will be before the face of the Great One unto all the generations of the world. The same subject is pursued throughout chaps. ciii., civ., the lot of the wicked in the next world being also described.

The fuller doctrine of the Future Life may be further illustrated from Ps. xvi. 8-11 :

*I have set the Lord always before me,
Because he is at my right hand I shall not
be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory re-
joiceth,
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.
For thou wilt not leave my soul to Shěôl,
Neither wilt thou suffer thy beloved to see the
Pit.
Thou wilt show me the path of life ;
In thy presence is fulness of joy,
At thy right hand there is loveliness for ever.*

It is noticeable here, that while the psalmist realizes that he will have to go to *Shěôl*

(though he will not be left there), he knows that, as one of God's beloved, he will not see the Pit. Here, therefore, there is a clear reference to the belief in a differentiation between the good and the evil in the next world. The conviction that the righteous will hereafter abide in the presence of God, which is so clearly expressed here, is also the thought in the two following passages, xvii. 15 :

*As for me, in righteousness let me behold thy
face,
Let me satisfied be, when I awake, with thy
form.*

The context shows that the awakening here is from the sleep of death. And finally, xlix. 15 (16 in Hebr.):

*God will redeem my life from Shěôl,
For he will take me.*

Here again the thought of the psalmist finds an echo in the *Book of Enoch*, li. 1, 2 :

*And in those days will the earth also give
back those who are treasured up within it ;
and Shěôl also will give back that which it has*

received, and Hell will give back that which it owes. And He will choose the righteous and holy from among them ; for the day of their redemption hath drawn nigh.

VI. SUMMARY.

Our examination of the doctrine of the Future Life in the Psalms shows once more that different stages of belief are represented here. A necessary preliminary in the study of this subject was, as we have seen, an investigation into the Old Testament conceptions regarding *Shěôl*, the abode of the departed ; not less necessary was the acquisition of some clear ideas as to what the Old Testament teaching is about the *Rephaim*, or "Shades," the inhabitants of *Shěôl*. Both these subjects we have dealt with. Further, we examined the Old Testament teaching concerning body, soul, and spirit, in the light of beliefs regarding these held by races other than the Hebrew. We then dealt more specifically with the teaching in the Psalms ; and here we saw, in the first place, that according to the normal doctrine there was no differentiation in *Shěôl* in the relative conditions between the righteous and the

wicked. A very important fact to which attention was then drawn was that, with some notable exceptions in the more developed doctrine, God was not concerned with *Shěôl* or its inhabitants; this, at any rate, is the general teaching in the Psalms. A fact which was not without its influence in the development of higher conceptions concerning the Hereafter was seen to have been that of the desire for a seed, in order that the memory of the righteous might be preserved by their posterity; this was illustrated by quotations from *Ecclesiasticus* and the *Book of Enoch*.

Finally, we dealt with the doctrine in its more developed form, and here we saw that, although the passages in which this is represented in the Psalms are not many in number, yet very exalted conceptions are reflected there. All depends upon the doctrine of God; this we illustrated by quotations from the Psalms. Nevertheless, we showed that one must bear in mind that for long periods older, materialistic, conceptions ran side by side with more spiritual ones. With the fuller and more developed belief concerning the Hereafter came the solution of the great problem as to how the justice

and love of God could be reconciled with the everyday facts of the prosperity of the wicked, and the adversity of the righteous, namely, that for the latter alone was reserved a blissful Immortality.

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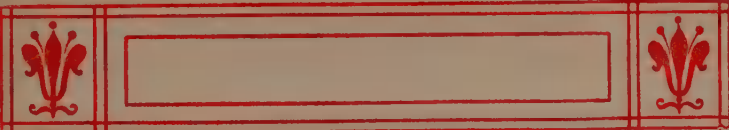
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